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HORACIO "EL NEGRO" HERNANDEZ

Just when you think there's nothing more that can possibly be done on the drumset, someone like "El Negro" comes along and ups the ante. Cuba's ambidextrous demon has spun heads with Michel Camilo, Paquito D'Rivera, and the TropiJazz All Stars. His latest gig, with Santana, will only leave more of us shaking our heads in disbelief.

by Robin Tolleson

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JEFF HAMILTON

Perhaps the epitome of today's classy, swinging, smart jazz drummer, Jeff Hamilton provides a blueprint for playing the right parts at the very right moments. Whether leading his own groups or backing the best of the genre, Hamilton's time is always the *right* time.

by Burt Korall

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ZACHARY ALFORD

Time and again, when major stars like Bruce Springsteen, Billy Joel, and the B-52's have arrived at important crossroads in their careers, they've entrusted their drum chair to the flashy but solid Zachary Alford. Now David Bowie has put the young drummer to the test on his challenging new material, and the results speak for themselves.

by Adam Budofsky

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Survey Says?

Every three to four years, we commission a magazine research firm to conduct a reader survey for us. A four-page questionnaire is sent to 1,000 randomly selected subscribers, and includes questions ranging from drumming background, styles played, and buying habits to what readers like and dislike most about *Modern Drummer*. The information we gather from the survey aids us in keeping the magazine as useful, informative, and entertaining as possible, and helps us stay abreast of the changing needs of our readership. Here's a bit of what we found out this time around.

Of all *MD* readers, 97% are male, with the average age being 30.8 years. Our typical subscriber has been drumming an average of 16.2 years, and plays 11.2 hours per week. Semi-pro drummers make up 38% of our readership, with the remainder equally divided among professional drummers, students, and amateur/hobbyists. The leading styles of

music played are mainstream rock, blues/R&B, alternative rock, and funk, and 60% of readers perform in a band that plays an average of 3.5 dates per month.

When questioned about educational background, we found that over 23% of those surveyed have had some form of musical training beyond high school, 80% have studied with a private instructor, and 88% read music. Regarding buying trends, readers told us that their most commonly purchased items are sticks, heads, cymbals, and hardware, in that order. Nearly 96% of our subscribers read the ads in *MD*, and 87% have taken some type of action as a result of reading an article or product review. It was also interesting to note that our average reader picks up each issue of *Modern Drummer* 5.8 times before he or she is finished with it, then saves it for future reference, referring back to it an average of 9 times throughout the year.

When asked specific questions regard-

ing *MD*'s editorial content, the majority of respondents felt that our balance of featured artists was "about right." The most favored editorial elements of *MD* are the interviews and product reporting, and the five most popular *MD* departments are *Kit Of The Month*, *Ask A Pro*, *Product Close-Up*, *New And Notable*, and *It's Questionable*.

Finally, we asked our survey participants to offer any additional thoughts they might have, positive or negative. Hundreds of comments were listed in our report, ranging from "Great magazine, I look forward to every issue," "The only magazine I read cover to cover," and "Thanks for years of inspiration," to "You've gotten too big and busy," "Your content puts me to sleep," and "Some of the drummers you guys interview really suck!" Oh well, can't please everybody—but that doesn't mean we won't keep trying.

For Spagnardi

MODERN DRUMMER

The World's Most Widely Read Drum Magazine



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by e-mail: moddrum@intac.com

CHAD GRACEY



Thank you for the well-deserved cover story on Chad Gracey [June '97 *MD*]. Chad proved himself to be a down-to-earth guy who doesn't live on the drum throne, but who can still move a rockin' band like Live with cool tom fills and an easy bass groove.

I found Chad's distant relationship with the drumset surprising. He doesn't practice (or even own a set at home), yet he's able to play with incredible intensity. A lot of readers will likely express disappointment with Chad's "I play only when I have to" attitude. But he deserves credit for his ability alone. If I played 250 shows on the road away from my home and family, I wouldn't touch the set when I got back, either.

John Crandall
Mt. Laurel, NJ

Chad Gracey doesn't practice, he doesn't really care too much about drumming, and he doesn't feel like improving himself. Wow! I'm really amped about playing drums after reading *that* article! Please, in the future, pick somebody who has a passion for drumming. If this is the philosophy of a "modern drummer," we're in trouble.

Mark Saxon
Orlando, FL

The Chad Gracey article was inspiring—and refreshing. Some guys get way too technical. To just *play* the drums...to place a tom hit just because it sounds good, not because it's a perfect fit to a measure...man, *that's* music. Don't get me wrong; the mathematicians of the drums are all great, too. But imagine Keith Moon explaining the way he played!

Gene Grala
Bristol, CT

ADRIAN YOUNG

It's refreshing to read about a young drummer who is so passionate about the drums. I recently saw No Doubt live, and Adrian Young blew me away with his chops, his tasteful playing, and his stage presence. Thanks for covering a young drummer (like myself) I can look up to and get inspiration from.

Ron Clavijo
Chantilly, VA

I saw Adrian Young on *Saturday Night Live* doing "Don't Speak," and I was totally impressed by his creativity. It's great to see a young rock drummer who doesn't sound like a metronome or a machine!

I was also glad to see that in your story on Young, he paid tribute to Bob Marley's fantastic drummer, the late Carlton Barrett. A great way to see/hear Barrett in action is on the video *Marley Live At The Rainbow*, which is available commercially. They do a killer version of "I Shot The Sheriff" on which Carlton really shines! It's a must-see for fans of great drumming, and I'd be happy to send Adrian Young a copy if he'd like one.

Joan May
Box 931
Eldridge, CA95431

DUAL DRUMMERS

Andy Rothman's statement (in the June '97 *Readers' Platform*) that Phil Collins' duets with Chester Thompson are the only examples of dual drumming that have the feel of "one mind, one drummer" is outrageous. Has he never heard the Allman Brothers Band? He should spend a few moments listening to Butch Trucks and Jaimoe. Throw in Marc Quinones and you have *three* drummers playing as one!

Steve Hatch
Austin, TX

"...AND THE LORD TAKETH AWAY" RESPONSES

In your June '97 *Readers' Platform* Ronald Cooke of Sellersburg, Indiana says that he has recently turned his life over to Christ,

and that he is canceling his subscription because he finds certain elements of your magazine offensive. His examples include a death metal roundtable, a Tama ad with Lars Ulrich, and a recent cover story on Tool's Danny Carey.

Mr. Cooke, the title of the magazine is "Modern Drummer." Its goal is to provide informative articles about drumming, drummers, equipment, education, etc. to drummers of all breeds. Your suggestion that *MD* should "be more selective" is absurd. Most readers would probably agree with me in wanting to see *MD* twice as thick, as opposed to having any information omitted from its pages. If you see something you don't like, turn the page. I don't always find every article appealing, either, but I don't allow that to hinder the growth of my knowledge about drumming. As for the morality issue, if a young reader has nowhere to go for guidance besides a magazine, that person has a problem beyond the scope of this publication.

It's too bad you've canceled your subscription and thus may never read this. I also serve the Lord, and he hasn't asked me to cancel mine.

Ron Hudyt
San Diego, CA

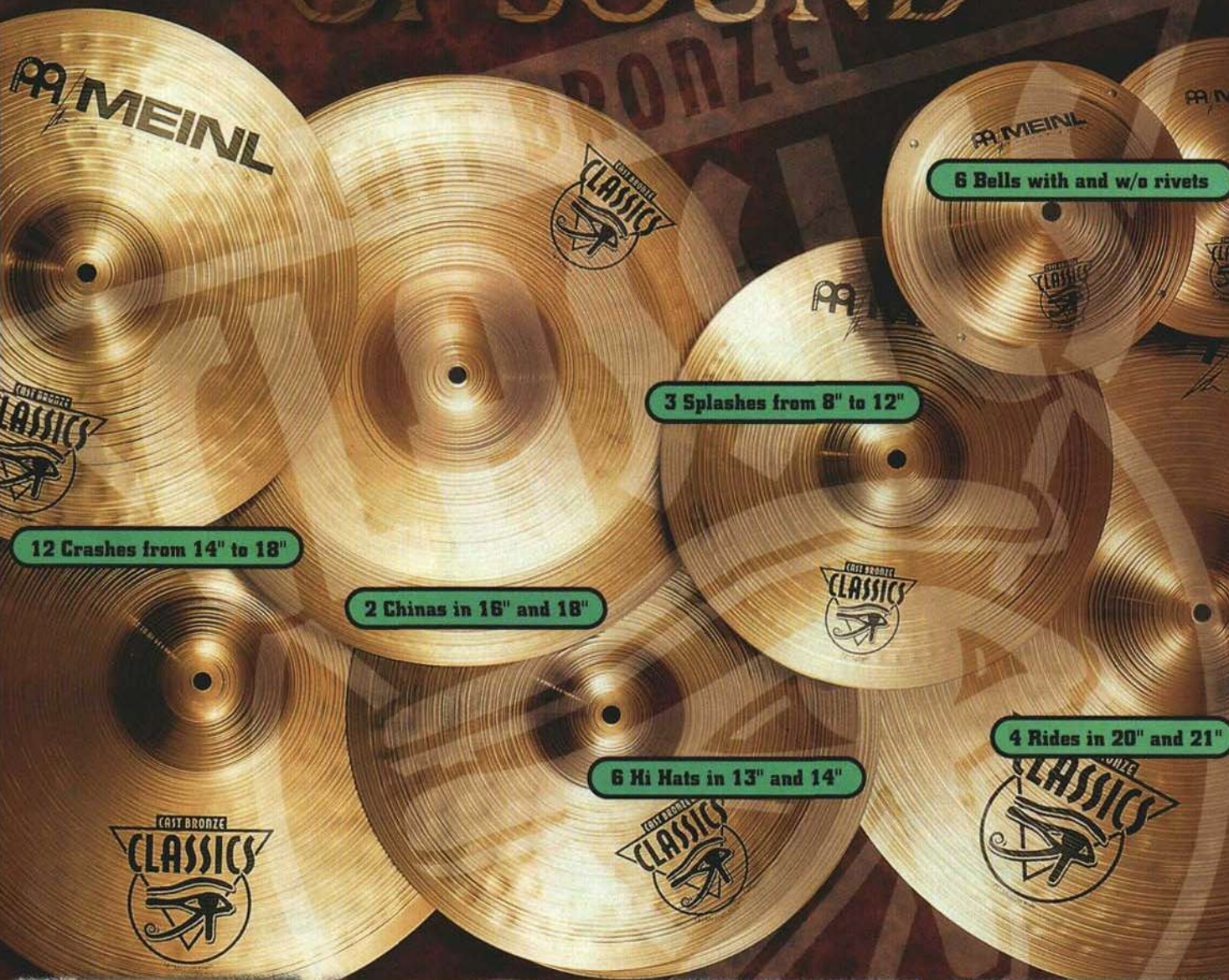
I admire Mr. Cooke's level of faith, but he's way too quick to be judgmental and self-righteous. If a judgment is to be made, *God* gets to make it. I—and possibly the majority of *MD* readers—couldn't care less what kind of "demonic symbols" Danny Carey has behind his kit. That's his business. What we're interested in is his ability to play the drums.

SJ.
via Internet

Any easily influenced youngster looking for Satanic thrills, sensationalism, and profanity in *MD's* pages would be sorely disappointed. In the six years I've subscribed, the focus of all the interviews, without exception, has been on the subject's function and perspective as a musician/drummer/percussionist, along with other important aspects of navigating in the world of music.

Tony Juarez
Phoenix, AZ

DEFINITION OF SOUND



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Peter Michael Escovedo · E-Train
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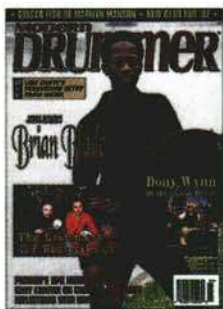
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...HANDCRAFTED IN GERMANY

Mr. Cooke was so taken aback by the decor on Danny Carey's walls that he couldn't see that there was a truly gifted player being interviewed. *MD's* very competent staff are not on the Devil's payroll, nor do they need the morality police. I find no redeeming value in the music of Marilyn Manson, but I still found some of the Ginger Fish interview informative. Isn't that the point of a drumming magazine?

Jim Ainsburg
Cumberland, RI

RUSTED ROOT'S DRUMS



I'm writing regarding an error in your May '97 article on the drummers of Rusted Root. The equipment list states that they play various LP talking drums, which is not true. They play only JAG talking drums. I am a student of Joe Galeota (the owner of JAG) at Berklee

College of Music. Joe makes all of his excellent drums by hand, and works very, very hard. I would like to see a correction in *Modern Drummer*. It's only fair.

Brian Rizzi
Boston, MA

DRUMS AND ECONOMICS

While I understand Chris Beck's feelings regarding the high cost of drums (as expressed in his May '97 *Readers' Platform* letter), I don't agree with his position that manufacturers don't care about their customers' financial problems. Like any other businesses, drum companies must make profits in order to survive. While we may not appreciate their prices, there are options to this predicament.

I have three suggestions. First, get a job to buy your own equipment. Many of us worked to get our first kits, and while the work may not be pleasant, the reward of earning the equipment certainly is. Second, investigate the used-drum market, where you can often find excellent equipment at substantially reduced prices. Third, make sure you deal with stores that offer good gear and service at reasonable prices.

Finally, remember that good equipment does not automatically equal proficient playing. Those of us who cannot necessarily afford the best gear make do with what we have. Focus on how you play, not on what gear you're playing.

Mark Karjaluo
via Internet

ZILDJIAN, LENNIE, AND STEVE

Congratulations on your excellent article on that most sacred of instruments, the ride cymbal. As we all know, ride cymbals can be highly controversial, eliciting all kinds of emotional responses amongst us drummers. Your article was very enjoyable and certainly as comprehensive as space would allow.

In the interest of ensuring the accuracy of the facts presented to your readers, I would like to correct some of the information presented with regard to my good friend Steve Gadd. As I am sure you are aware, I have been with the Zildjian com-

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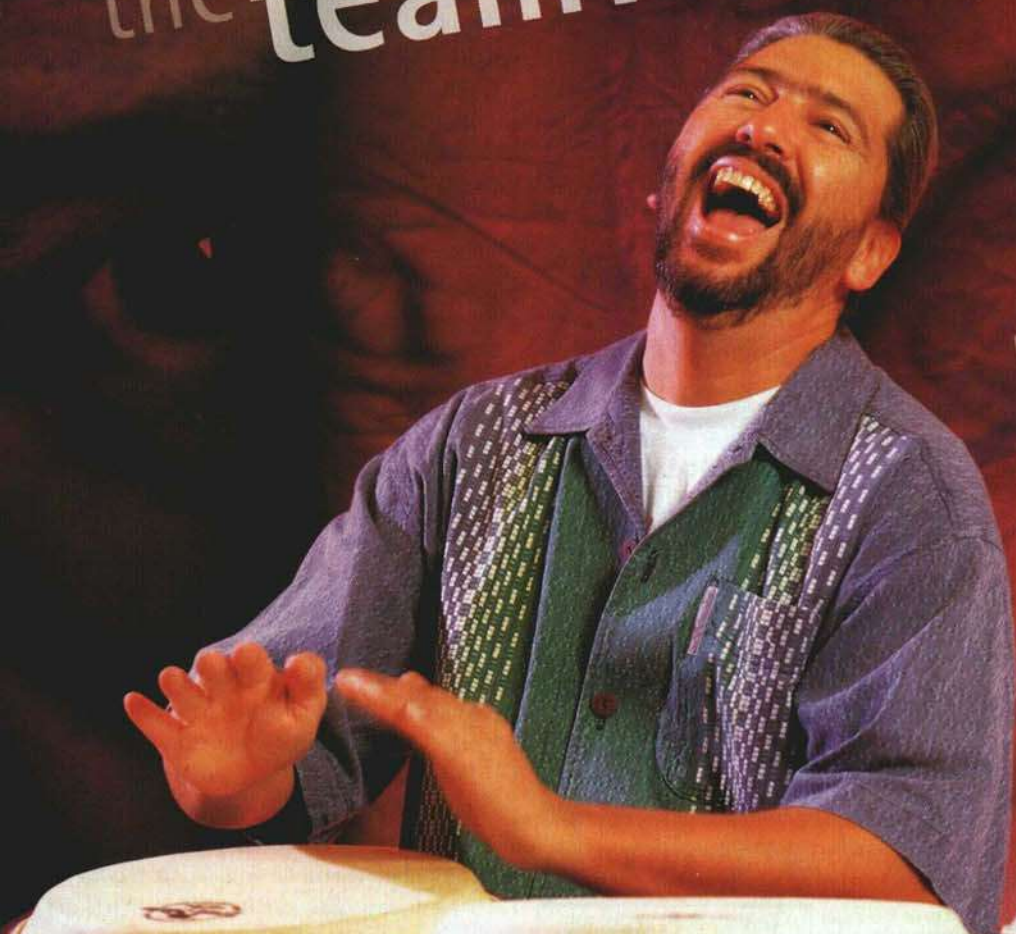
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Can't Get Through? Write: Sam Ash Music, Department X, P.O. Box 9047, Hicksville NY 11802

pany for over thirty-five years now, having joined in 1961. I alone was responsible for selecting the cymbals for many of the great drummers mentioned in your article, including Steve Gadd. Steve's main ride cymbal was a cracked old K, which he used for many years until he made a visit to the Zildjian factory in 1982 (which was long after Dan Barker had left to work for Sabian). We had not made any prototype cymbals for him up until that time, though since the mid-'80s Steve has become an active member of our R&D team—helping us with the development of new cymbals like the *K Customs* and *Pre-Aged Ks*.

At the time of Steve's 1982 visit, we had just begun experimenting with early versions of a new hammering technique that would later be perfected to create the *K Custom* range. We were hanging out in Armand Zildjian's office at the end of the day, and Steve pulled the cymbal in question out from a pile of various prototype cymbals. He began to play it and immediately fell in love with it. So much so, in fact, that he refused to leave the building without the cymbal! I had to track Armand down in Japan (where he was visiting our distributor) to check with him that it would be okay for Steve to take that cymbal. Obviously Armand said yes, and this has been the ride cymbal that Steve has used on pretty much every recording since, and still uses to this day. It is a medium-weight, machine-hammered, unlathed and unbuffed 18" cymbal. (I still have its sister model—a 16"—in my office.) It has an ultra-dry sound, and the cymbal in our current line that most closely resembles it would be an 18" *K Custom* ride.

One final point: My colleague, Colin Schofield, asked me to let you know that since your article was written, Brian Blade visited us at the factory. We were amazed to discover that the main ride cymbal of his that was discussed in the article, though indeed a crash-weight early-'70s A Zildjian, is in fact a 24", not a 20". Who would have thought?

Thank you for this opportunity to set the record straight, and congratulations again on a most interesting article.

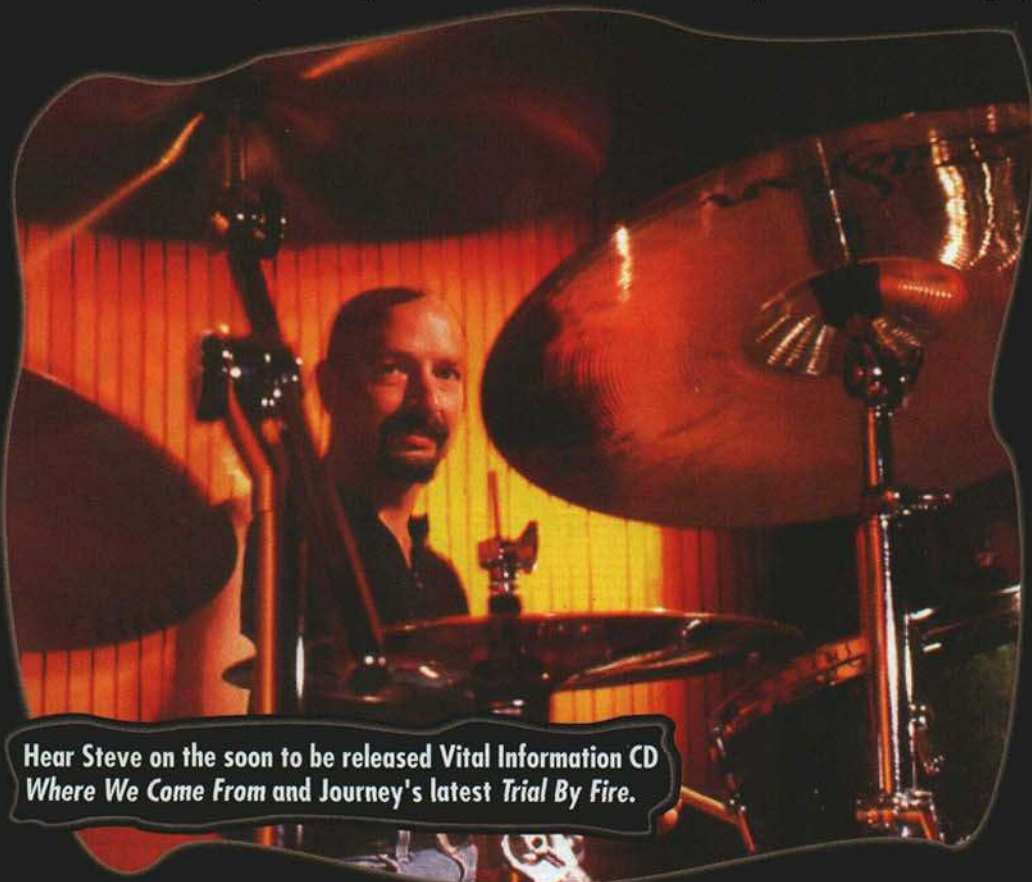
Lennie DiMuzio
Director of Education, Band & Orchestral
Avedis Zildjian Company
Norwell, MA



"Steve takes the complex and makes it look simple, and feel so good."

Tim Alexander on Steve Smith

"Steve is someone I looked up to when I started playing professionally. He's a master technical drummer, and very musical. Steve's skill and ability make his drumming appear effortless. His style is so smooth and fluid, he takes the complex and makes it look simple, and feel so good."



Hear Steve on the soon to be released Vital Information CD *Where We Come From* and Journey's latest *Trial By Fire*.



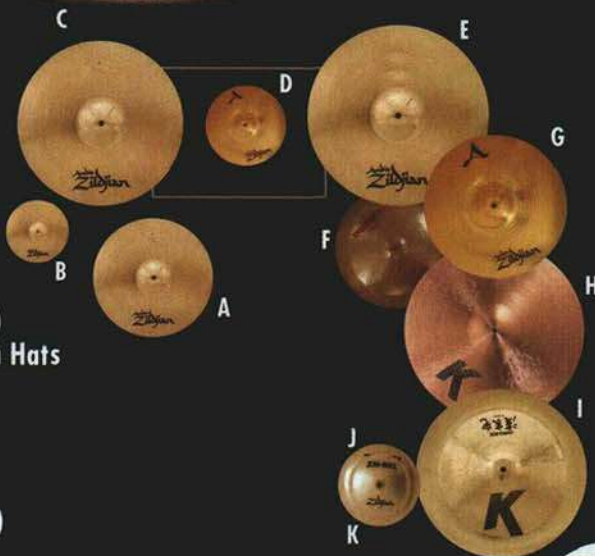
Steve Smith on Zildjian:

"Zildjian and the tradition of drumming in the United States are one and the same. Zildjian was the cymbal musicians played as drumming evolved from New Orleans to Bebop to modern music. Zildjian blazed the trail."

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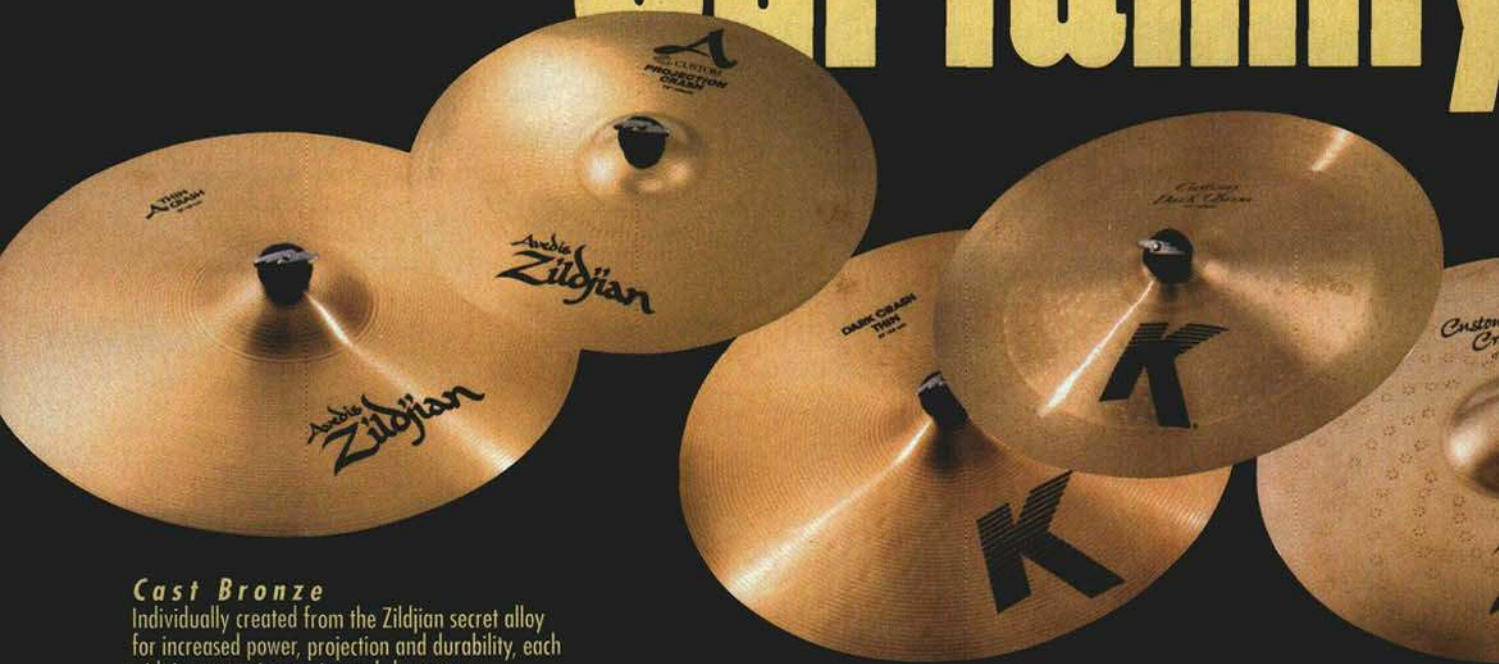
Steve's Set-up:

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- B. 6" A Splash
- C. 18" A Medium Thin Crash (or 18" K Custom Dark Crash)
- D. 8" A Custom Splash
- E. 20" A Medium Ride Brilliant (or 22" K Custom Medium Ride)
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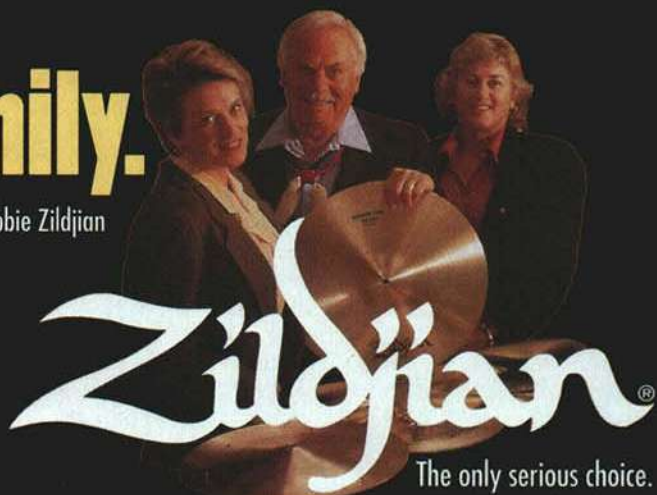
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Michael Shrieve

Santana Roots

"It was like going back to the old neighborhood and finding that nothing had changed," says Michael Shrieve about the reunion of several original members of Santana in the band *Abraxas Pool*. Along with Shrieve, the band includes keyboardist and vocalist Gregg Rolie, guitarist Neal Schon, percussionists Michael Carabello and Jose "Chepito" Areas, and bassist Alphonso Johnson. The music is in the style of the original Santana sound, but the band isn't just rehashing old tunes. The *Abraxas Pool* album (Miramar/BMG) features new compositions with a fresh outlook.

As a result of his early work in Santana, Shrieve is hailed by many as a master of Latin drumset playing—a reputation *Abraxas Pool* will surely enhance. But Shrieve doesn't consider himself an authority on Latin beats. So many people now can play very authentically and impeccably, but my approach is such a hybrid, mongrel way of playing," he says. "I just try to fit in with what the congas and timbales are doing. In all the great Latin music, the charm is in the way everybody plays patterns that fit together."

The only thing missing is Carlos Santana himself, but Shrieve says that Santana has been talking to him and Rolie about working together again in the near future. In the meantime, Shrieve has recorded tracks for a project he calls "Drums of Compassion" on which he used eighteen drumset up in a semi-circle, which he played from a standing position.

"It's almost like meditation music," he explains. "Oftentimes I listen to music that will create a relaxing atmosphere, but most of it doesn't have drums. I wanted to make an album that would create that same mood, but with drums. The music is pulse-oriented rather than beat-oriented."

Recently, Shrieve became A&R director for a newly formed record company called Samson. "There's a whole demographic being ignored by the major record labels, which is my age group," Shrieve says. "So we'll be looking at that segment of the market."

Shrieve sees his new job as an extension of his life as a musician. "I'm not the kind of drummer who gets ten calls a day for studio work," he says. "At a certain point, you have to figure out what you want to do and find things that interest you. Often, you have to initiate projects yourself and do them."

Rick Mattingly

The Kentucky HeadHunters'

If the Kentucky HeadHunters' new album, *Stompin' Grounds*, reminds you of their first release, *Pickin' On Nashville*, it's because the two albums have a lot in common. For starters, singer/guitarist Doug Phelps has returned to the band, restoring the group's original mix of country-style vocals backed by a driving rock band.

Equally significant is that the band was actually without a record contract when the tracks were recorded, as was the case with their first album. "We decided to do a demo tape and shop it around like we did the first time," drummer Fred Young explains. "We recorded in a studio in Glasgow, Kentucky that has a lot of analog equipment. It was great to get away from that digital thing; our band just doesn't sound right that way."

"It was a blast doing this record," Fred enthusiastically reports. "We had plenty of time to get things the way we wanted. When we played it for RCA, they listened to about a song and a half and said, 'It's a go!' We cut twenty-two songs, so we've already got some good stuff for the next album."

On the road, Young still uses his kit composed most-

FRED
YOUNG

ly of old Ludwig and Leedy marching drums, but he says that the live kit is a bit heavy-sounding for the studio. "For the new album, I used a Ludwig *Rock Duo* set from the mid-'60s that I bought in a pawn shop in Ohio," he says. "I used the same snare drum that I used for *Pickin' On Nashville*, which is a little six-lug, wood-shell Ludwig *Pioneer* model. It's fun playing a simpler setup in the studio because it keeps me from trying to play 'Wipe Out' in the middle of a tune."

"A lot of people play old drums now," Fred adds. "No matter how you tune them, they're always going to have some kind of good sound. A lot of the new drums all sound the same; they don't have character."

While Young still has his eyes open for the quality vintage drums, he isn't buying them up the way he once did. "I'll tell you what: You can only play one set at a time," he says. "If you can get to know one drumset and stay in touch with it, it keeps you much keener on what you're doing than if you play fifty different drums."

Rick Mattingly

THE VERVE PIPE'S DONNY BROWN

While "The Freshmen" is the Verve Pipe's third single, it is the first one to go Top-40. What is on the radio is actually a re-recorded version, though, unlike the one originally included on their album *Villains*. All future pressings of the album, however, will contain the Jack Joseph-Puig produced rendition.

"The original album version is very laid-back, very whispery, and the drums are played with brushes," explains drummer Donny Brown. "Jerry Harrison [producer] asked me to try to play the beat from 'Walk On The Wild Side' by Lou Reed, but I realized that it was a little too funky for the feel of this song. I came up with a revolving pattern, which they actually threw into a computer and looped. I thought it worked, but I would rather hear the drums move with the song, which is something we decided to do with the new version."

The producer of the remake, Joseph-Puig, conceived of using vintage drums. According to Donny, "We played mix & match with all kinds of different drums—old *Radio Kings*, Tama brass snare drums, my Drum Workshop drums—and came up with a conglomerate kit of Drum Workshop, an old '60s Premier mounted tom, and a '30s *Radio King* 28" bass drum. It was a very simple part, and it actually doesn't stray off the snare drum and bass drum—except to the cymbals—but the kit sounded fantastically together.

Everything was very resonant and open. It was the first time I played a front-headed bass drum in the studio that didn't have any kind of muffling. It really filled the room."

Donny's personal favorite from the album is "Reverend Girl," which is in 6/8. According to Donny, "I had some holes to fill, and I didn't want to play stock fills, so I bastardized J.R. Robinson's little roll from Steve Winwood's 'Back In The High Life.'"

Donny is looking forward to recording the band's next project, which they will begin in late summer. "I'm hoping to record with a couple of different drumsets that work within the context of each song. That's why people have massive snare drum collections. But I'm not interested in just the snare drum, and honestly, I'm not interested in getting things that are worlds apart from each other. I'm only interested in getting something that's *right* for the song."

Robyn Flans



Carl Palmer

"There won't be any karaoke drumming up here this evening," announced Carl Palmer, referring to the number of drummers now playing to backing tapes at clinics. Palmer was opening the first of three clinics he decided to do while on a rare vacation to the States.

The *Modern Drummer* Hall of Fame member has been keeping busy with various projects lately. This summer has him touring again with ELP in Europe, Mexico, and South America, a highlight of which will be an appearance with the re-formed Supertramp at the 30th anniversary Montreux Jazz Festival in Switzerland. ELP has also been busy recording a new CD. Taking a page from a past classic, they have reunited with famed Swiss artist H.R. Gieger, who did their *Brain Salad Surgery* album artwork back in

1972 (and the designs for the film *Aliens*).

One question frequently asked of Carl is, What ever happened to his engraved, stainless steel *Works-era* drumset? "Ringo Starr has it," explains Carl. "It's in storage in Surrey, England. I don't use it anymore because it's too heavy to transport. It took two people to lift the bass drum! I was sponsored by British Steel for a while; they made the shells and thought they were doing me a favor making them half an inch thick. We paid astronomical amounts of money to transport it. We even had a stage collapse on us once—it was up on a riser with the heavy gongs and the big church bell. But it's conning over here to the Rock 'N' Roll Hall Of Fame in Cleveland, Ohio."

This year, Rhino records will be releasing a compilation CD for each member of ELP. "Mine will have some unreleased tracks going back to when I was fifteen," says Carl. "It will also have my 'Percussion Concerto.'" That concerto, showing Carl's classical training, was recorded years ago, but was never released.

Michael Bettine



Kenny Aronoff is on tour with John Fogerty.

Will Goldsmith is no longer with Foo Fighters. Taylor Hawkins (recently with Alanis Morissette) is now in the band.

Chad Smith is working on a new Chili Peppers album.

Chet McCracken recently recorded with the group Anuenu (that's Hawaiian for rainbow), playing drums, marimba, and vibes on *North Beach Dream*.

Roger Carter is on Berlin's new record. He is currently on tour in Europe with Leah Andreone.

Frank Briggs can be heard on the new Western Vacation CD *Vibraudoblast* (along with Chris Frazier) and on guitarist Eric Byak's CD *Journey Of The Heart*. Frank also recorded six songs for St. Clair's upcoming debut album (splitting the chores with Vinnie Colaiuta). Frank is currently putting the finishing touches on four new instructional books to be published this fall by Mel Bay.

Tony Sevens is on Summercamp's debut release, *Pure Juice*.

Mark Arrington is on the Herbivores' self-titled debut CD.

Jerry O'Neill is now touring with Voodoo Glow Skulls.

Giti Khalsa is on tour with 7 Mary 3 in support of their new release, *Hock Crown*.

John Humphrey is in the studio with the Nixons.

Charlie Grover is back in the studio with Sponge.

Nick Menza is about to hit the road with Megadeth.

David Anderson recently completed several clinics and is about to begin recording with the Rippingtons for a new album that should be out by the end of the year.

Paul Buckley is on Orbit's new release, *Libido Speedway*.

Chris Parker recently worked with Hurt Bacharach and Elvis Costello on the Grammy-nominated "God, Give Me Strength" and Natalie Cole's "Stardust." He's also just finished a new project with Victor Bailey, Reggie Young, and Herbie Mann called Memphis 2000.

Famed Lynyrd Skynyrd drummer Artimus Pyle is back with a new band called Those Guys. The band will be on the road over the summer, and then on October 20 they'll perform a concert (opening for Billy Ray Cyrus) at the site of the plane crash that took the lives of several members of Lynyrd Skynyrd in 1977. (October 20 is the twentieth anniversary of the crash.)



Tony Coleman



by Robyn Flans

Photos by Ebet Roberts

IN THE BLUES GROOVE

Tony Coleman has spent the better part of his life playing the blues with the leading artists in the field, and he takes it very seriously. "The blues gets bad press a lot," he says. "People think blues is about being on stage, drunk, and saying, 'Let's jam.'"

"You can't be lackadaisical on B.B. King's stage, though," asserts Coleman, who has played with King, on and off, since 1980. "He has no friends on stage, and he will tell you that. B.B. is a disciplinarian. You cannot be on stage winking at girls, drinking beer, or smoking cigarettes. He wants your undivided attention—150%—every night. When you come on B.B. King's stage, it's to do one thing: to help him project his music to the audience. It's very difficult, but I wish more bands were like that. When I have my own band, I'll know exactly what to do. You have to be a good follower before you can be a good leader."

Tony began to develop his skills as a follower at an early age. He joined the army at eighteen to escape his hometown of Kissimmee, Florida—which he thought of as a "cow town." While in the army he put a band together. Upon their release, the band went to Chicago. Ultimately, only he and the bass player remained. "We lived in a house with a family called the Waltons, can you believe it?" Tony laughs. "They let us live in their basement. It was a family with nine sisters. Mr. Walton was a bass player who understood what we were trying to do. Meanwhile Mrs. Walton was going, 'I'm going to help you guys get *real* jobs.' All the girls sang in the church, and one of them was opening for blues singer Otis Clay. We went along to a rehearsal, and it turned out that Otis needed a bass player and a drummer. So we got the gig. From working with him, we got to work with different people in Chicago. That's where I got a PhD in getting my butt kicked."

Tony learned an abundance with Clay. "Otis would be trying to sing, 'Trying To Live My Life Without You Babe,' and I'd be back there doing Billy Cobham," Coleman remembers. "He'd turn around and look at me, and I'd say, 'Hey man, that was a hip lick.' Finally, the guy said, 'Tony, I'm going to give you a solo later. Just keep it in the pocket right now.'"

Coleman recorded a live album with Clay in Japan, and then had the opportunity to play with B.B. King for six months when King's drummer Calep Emphrey left due to health problems. When Emphrey returned, Tony joined Bobby Blue Bland's band for six years. Later he played with Johnny Taylor and Albert King, until B.B. wanted Tony to learn how to play congas and timbales in order to re-join his band on percussion. After three years, Tony was just a bass drum short of adding full-kit rhythms to B.B.'s blues. For the past four years he and Emphrey have played double drums in King's band.



"There are a lot of blues impostors around who don't really respect the music. They want to be in it because they think it's a cool thing to do."

"Two drummers make it look interesting and sound very powerful," Coleman asserts. "When you've got two drummers playing basically the same thing, it's double the power. It's like having two carburetors instead of one: One carburetor you know you can step on, the other one you can cruise on. It's like a salt and pepper thing, because no two drummers are going to play exactly the same thing. One guy might be playing the ride cymbal and the other might be playing the hi-hat. One might be doing the drum fills, while the other keeps the groove going. But at different times they're going to play exactly the same accents, based on the structure of the show. If the guitarist or frontman makes a breakdown, the drums are going to hit them at the same time. That's what rhythm & blues drumming is all about. It has a lot to do with feel, but it also has a lot to do with playing the show. I like playing with another drummer when we're really working together. When you're playing with

another drummer, you can either take the approach of, 'I'm going to be the domineering force' or 'I'm going to be flexible and still be strong.' If one guy is dragging or going too fast, you've got to hold it, because then you've got two guys battling each other.

"To work with B.B. King, we've got to have big ears," Coleman continues, "because we never know what he's going to do. He might stop in the middle of a song, or he might change the tempo. We've got to be ready at all times and keep our eyes on him. He might stop in the middle, play his guitar by himself, and then go right into another song without our having any idea what song it is until he starts singing it. It's funny when we go to a venue and someone asks for a set list. There isn't one. We know the first two songs. After that, we've just got to be ready. We've got to be well rested, too, because B.B. is going to play for an hour and a half to two hours, non-stop, with no breaks. When he finishes a song, he goes immediately into the next one: 'Thank you,' wipe the sweat, sip a drink, and then blam, blam, blam.

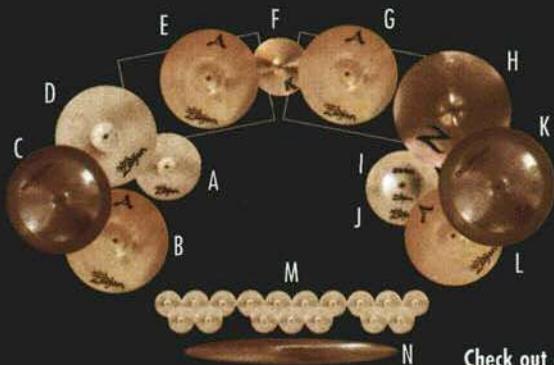


"Each artist has his own personality, and you've got to learn what that is because it reflects how he performs on stage. Say, for instance, Bobby Blue Bland," Coleman says of the blues legend he played with from 1980 to 1986. "He's kinda laid-back, and he's a crooner. He's the best blues singer in the business, but he likes it to float. He likes it in the pocket, just grooving with that double shuffle. He wants it consistent, and he wants it to flow. He requires you to play double on the kick—to kick him in the butt,

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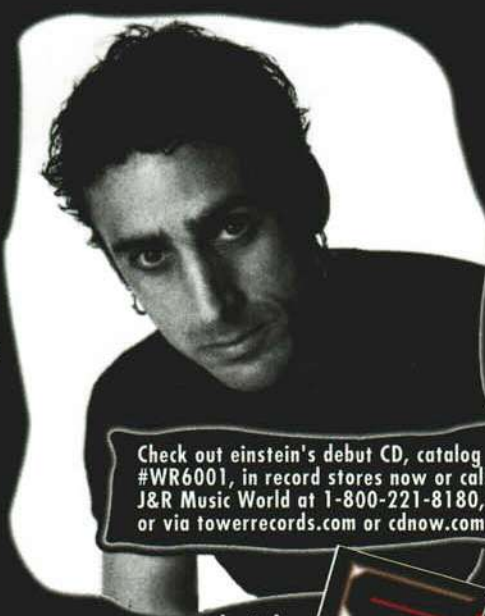
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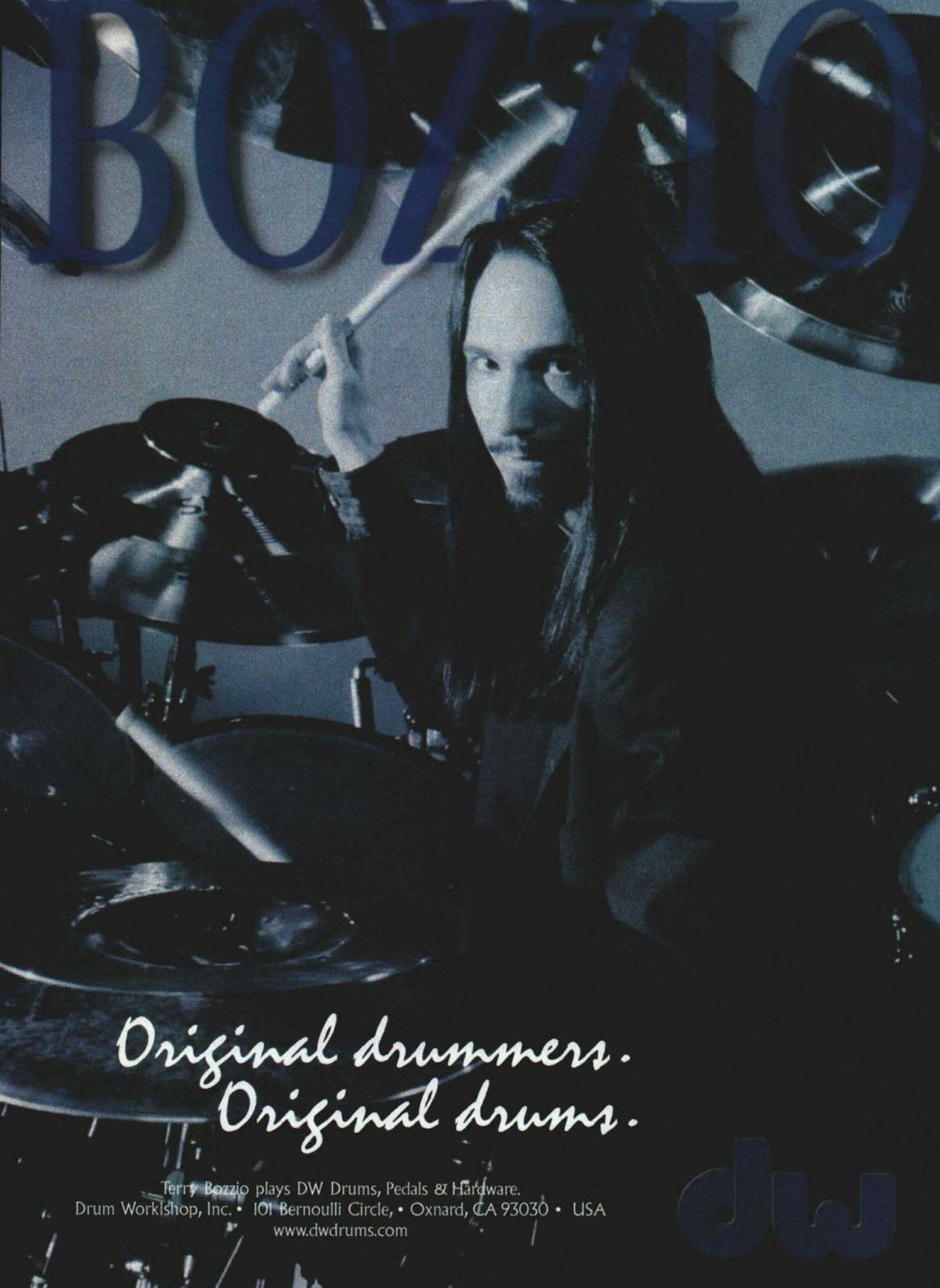


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so to speak. And he wants to hear the crack of the snare on the accent."

Tony says that Bland's band was where he really learned how to play a shuffle. "Both Bobby and Melvin Jackson, the sax player in the band, taught me. Basically, there are about four major shuffles they use. You can be playing a straight four on the foot and doing a double shuffle on the snare, and put an accent on the 2 and 4. You can also do that snare pattern on the hi-hat or the ride. Then you can change it up by doing a double shuffle on the bass

drum, where everything is double, including the snare and the ride. Then you can do a few little syncopated fills in between that. But you've got to have that shuffle happening.

"I'm still practicing that," Coleman admits. "Jabo Starks, James Brown's drummer—who also played with Bobby Blue Bland, on 'Turn On Your Love Light'—was incredible, and I still listen to those records today to try to refine that shuffle feel. I'm never happy with it. These guys have a feel for it. You can be techni-

cal, but if you're going to feel that flow with the bass and the singer, you've got to know how to feel that shuffle.

"Different artists feel it differently," Tony continues. "Someone like Johnny Taylor is pretty much real rhythm & blues soul. He likes a lot of in-the-pocket, 'kinda funky' playing. What I consider to be real funk is James Brown. I hear a lot of people talk about playing funk, but it's what you *don't* play as opposed to what you do play. Basically it's playing the space. It's right there all the time, but it's got space.

"Albert King liked to hear 16ths on the hi-hat consistently throughout, but he still wanted it funky. You've got to leave those little gaps in there where it flows with the bass. The type of bass pattern being played also dictates the groove and style. If it is a walking bass line, that's considered jazz-blues because the ride is like a jazz ride. But you still have to shuffle with one hand, and swing with the other. There might be a bumping bass line. There is a possibility of about six different types of blues patterns based on the bass and the drum feel, which really dictate where the guitar player goes with his solos. It's all based on the rhythm. If the drums are not giving them what they want, they can't play a particular type of blues. B.B.'s that way. He might want to play a Louie Jordan kind of thing or a Duke Ellington swing—or a B.B. King thing.

"B.B. wants it to be swinging all the time...not letting up...right on the edge—even when he's playing a slow song," Tony adds. "He doesn't like it to drag. Then again, he wants it real strong, and maybe a little laid-back, which is hard to do. I'm *still* trying to learn that. He might want it real quiet, but still assertive, played with intensity. And when I bring it up, it's still the same tempo, it just gets louder. B.B. wants me to fly 100 miles an hour through the clouds and then be able to stop on a dime with him."

While Tony loves all kinds of music and stresses the need to be versatile, he feels a special affinity with James Brown, whom he started out listening to as a youth. Ironically, Tony's father, King Coleman (whom Tony didn't meet until he was seventeen, having been raised mostly by his grandmother), worked within the James Brown organization for several years. "He was a percussion player and singer," says

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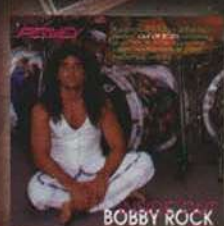
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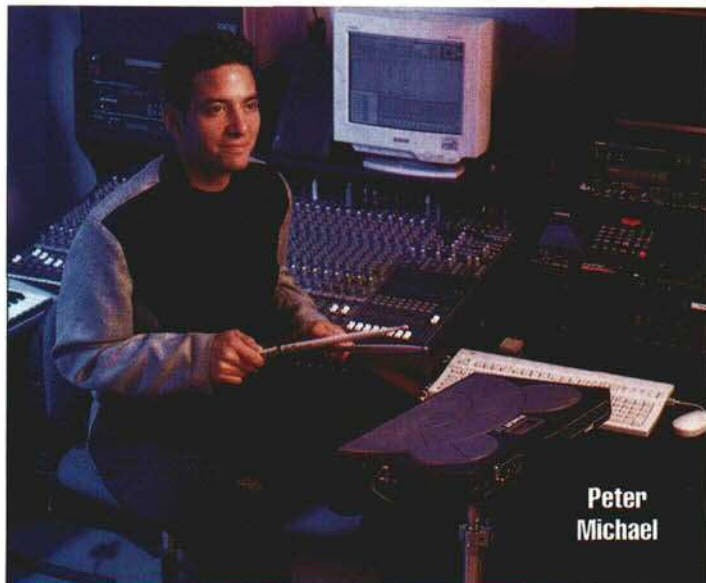
Tony. "He started a dance called the Mashed Potato with James Brown; you can hear him singing on the record. His picture is on the 'Legends' wall in the Apollo Theater. They say the fruit doesn't fall far from the tree. So I guess even though I may not have known him, I picked up his genes.

"When I was growing up, I listened to 'The Funky Drummer' and all that. That's the kind of drumming I'm impressed with, because it's so simple and yet complex. A lot of people don't understand it; they put too much in. A friend of mine told me he gets bored playing R&B. A lot of guys consider it boring. They want to be like a peacock, showing everything they've got. They've got everybody in front of them, and they want to be seen. When you're a drummer, you're looking at everybody's butt. When I work with my own band in my spare time, I put the drums right out front like Buddy Miles, and I don't see nobody's butt!" [laughs]

Last year Coleman released his own CD, *Out In The Open*. It took over two years to complete, and he is proud of it. "I spend a lot of time in hotels, in planes, in airports, buses, boats, and dog sleds," he jokes. "I've learned to spend my time writing songs. I want to take the blues to the next millennium. There are a lot of blues impostors around who don't really respect the music. They want to be in it because they think it's a cool thing to do. An impostor is someone who has been doing one thing for a long time, and when it stops working for them decides, 'Gee, I think I'll do the blues.' That would be like me all of a sudden wearing cowboy boots and a hat and saying I'm a western singer because I think it's cool.

"My goal is to be the best drummer I can be," Tony continues. "I think all professional people feel that way, but I want to be able to play with so much excitement, color, and energy that it will inspire someone to listen to—or buy—the music. I'm very intense about what I do because it's my life. I live, breathe, eat, and sleep drums. I'm excited about playing drums. The smell of drums gets me excited. The drumheads, the sticks, the cymbals shining, the foot pedals—everything about the drums excites me."

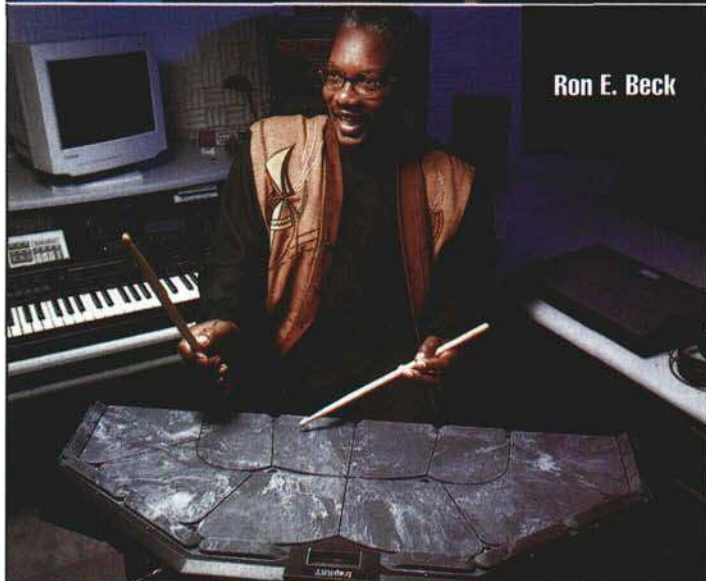
It's a good thing that Tony finds drums and drumming so exciting, because B.B.



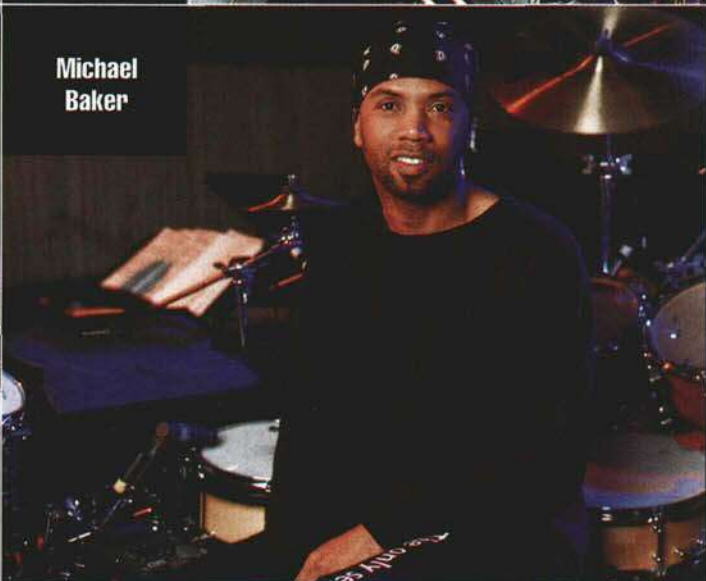
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King plays three hundred dates a year, and Tony works hard. He has no drum tech, and he often must work with prearranged gear. "A lot of times I don't have things I need," he says, "so I might be playing with something that's broken. But being a drummer with B.B. means being a workhorse. I've seen times when the monitors weren't working and B.B. will say, 'Well, we're only going to be here one night, gentlemen. Let's go to work.'"

Although he must roll with the punches, Coleman is particular about the equipment he uses. "Your instrument is the most important thing to you on stage. It's got to give you exactly what you want; you have to feel comfortable with it. It also has to be versatile and flexible. The first time I bought a set of Pearl drums was in 1973. Since then I've seen Pearl develop into what I consider to be one of the best drumsets in the world. Even if I wasn't endorsing Pearl, I'd be playing Pearl. A lot of people play stuff because they can get it; I play stuff because I really like it. I think a drummer's equipment is an extension of himself. You shouldn't play a certain brand just because you can get an endorsement. Integrity should be involved. It's a 50/50 thing: Endorsements should be respected by the endorser, and the company should respect the endorser."

Coleman has been with Sabian cymbals since 1985. "I like the attitude Sabian has about working with different types of artists," he says. "They seem to have an attitude that everybody who plays their product has something to offer; it's not based on how big or small you are. And I like the product. I alternate between a 20" *Hand Hammered* ride and a 21" *Rock* ride, because with B.B. I need the variety of sounds. I need a cymbal that can become loud if I want it loud. I have a China, which I like for a lot of the power and the accents. I alternate between 18" and 20" sizes. I use a 16" AA crash on the left for quick accents. I have a 16" medium-thin crash above the ride, and I alternate between an 18" AAX and a 20" *Rock* crash. I use the *El Sabor* hi-hats. Usually I use a total of six cymbals on stage, and I choose them according to the venue. I'll use the smaller, lighter cymbals when we play clubs and theaters, and the heavier cymbals for the arenas and outdoor gigs."

Coleman is adamant about the Remo heads he uses as well. "Occasionally I need to play with brushes, but I also need to get a good crack out of the snare. With the maple kit that I have, I find the Remo *Pinstripes* or *Emperors* on the top and *Ambassadors* on the bottom work best. I tune all my top heads basically the same, but I get my tone from tuning the bottom heads. I tune in fourths, and I want my stick response fairly tight. You can tune bottom heads tight to get the different tones. If one pitch is a little bright and one is a little dark, I'll tune the drums to get the tonality even all the way across the kit. I do that by tuning the bottom heads. If you tune the heads too low, they'll ring a lot. If you tighten them a little, the head won't vibrate as much. A lot of guys like to put tape on the drums, but I hate tape. I want the drum to sound like the drum. I like the drums to breathe, but I don't like them to ring too much."

DW has been supplying Coleman with some of his hardware. He also uses DW 5000 pedals, which are fitted with wide footboards to suit what he describes as his big feet. With all the equipment, he must consider the sound each frontman may desire, just as he takes into account their individual styles when he picks up the sticks.

As much as he loves the drums, Tony is aware of the danger of becoming one-dimensional as a person. "It's really important to have other interests in your life," he says, "because you can become too shallow in your ways of thinking. That's why I'm into equestrian activities and golf. Riding is just like drumming—you've got to have rhythm. In golf, too. Rhythm and timing apply to everything you do. If you're only into music, you're only going to see things from that standpoint, which I think is a fault of a lot of musicians. When you're able to do other things in life, it broadens your whole spectrum. For instance, just grooming a horse and taking care of it in order to ride it gives you a whole other outlook and feel for things. You can't be rough with the animal. It makes you more sensitive. I think that applies to anything: You combine all the facets of your life to create the whole picture."

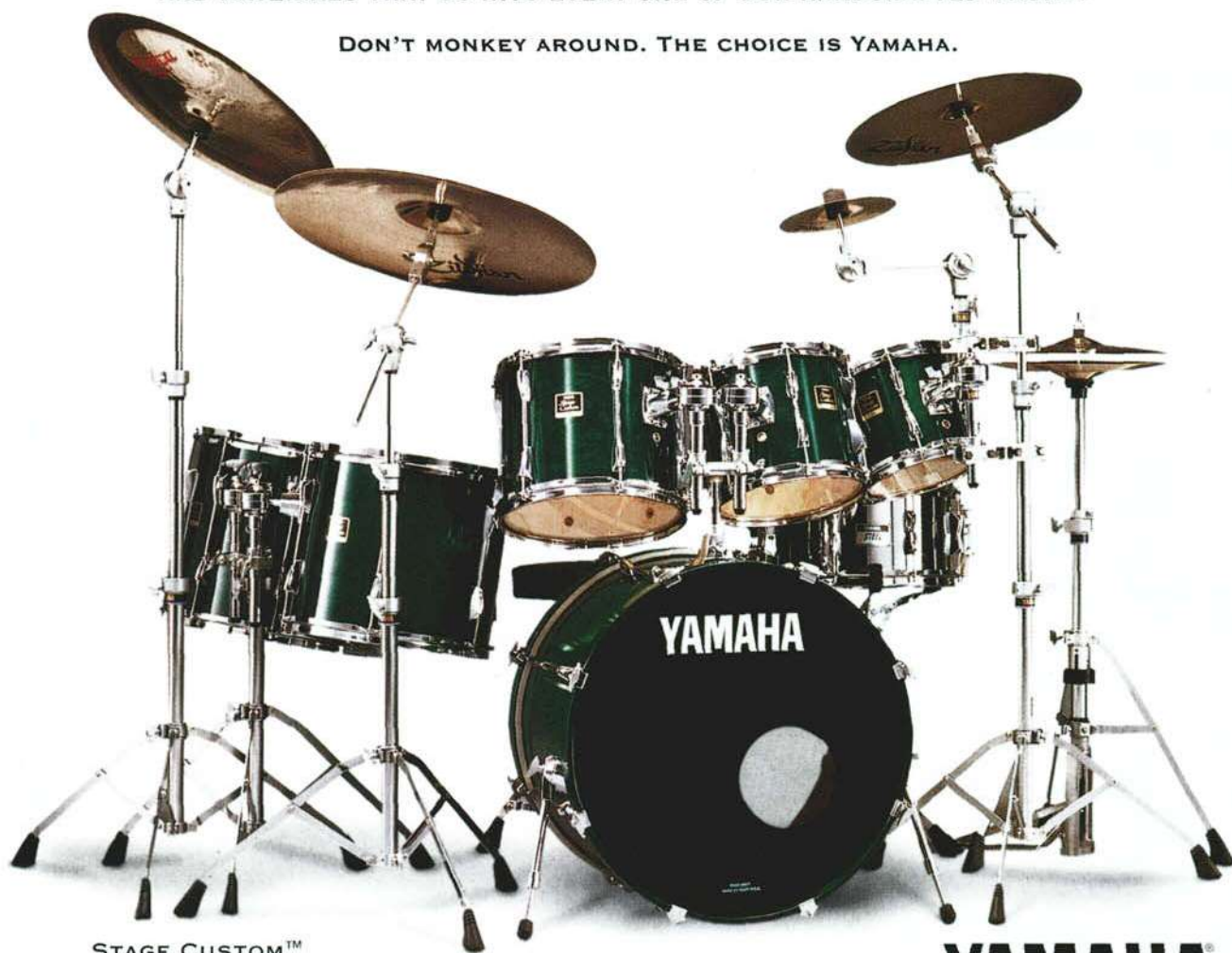


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Stephen Perkins

Q I love all of your work, and I'd like to know how you got your snare drum to sound the way it does on the *Porno For Pyros* album. I've loved it ever since I first heard it. (By the way, nice undies in *Exit To Eden*.)

John Wickett
USS John Paul Jones (DDG-53)
FPO AP San Francisco

A Thanks, John, for your letter, your support, and your positive energy. (You have a great eye when it comes to undergarments!) Now, for the snare sound on the first *Porno* record: I used a 5x13 wood DW snare drum with a very tight top head (coated Remo *Ambassador*) and a loose bottom head (*Diplomat* snare-side head). The snare bed on that drum is worn, and the tuning is nearly "timbale-sounding." We also used different miking techniques and electronic treatments for "flavoring."

Thanks again. Keep playing, and have fun



David Garibaldi

Q I purchased your *Tower Of Groove* video, and I really enjoyed your instruction and attitude. You always seem to be "in the pocket" when it comes to groove, and you always make playing drums seem so easy (even though it's not).

Whether playing in the studio or live, you seem to have a great taste for cymbal sounds. I'd like to know your philosophy about cymbal selection. In the *Tower Of Groove* video you're playing Paiste cymbals. I can't figure out the setup; I just know that they sound great. Could you tell me the sizes and type of cymbals you used on that video? Could you also outline your current Sabian setup?

Lee Bartlett
El Paso, TX

A Thanks for your kind comments. The Paiste cymbals used on the *Tower Of Groove* video were from the Paiste ("signature") line, and the sizes were as follows: 20" *Full ride*, 18" *Sound Creation Dark crash* (which I also used as an alternate ride), 17" *Full crash*, 14" *Fast crash*, 12" *splash*, 14" *Dark Crisp hi-hats*, and 12" *heavy hi-hats*. My current Sabian setup is as follows: 22" *Hand Hammered Jazz ride*, 17" *AAX Studio crash*, 16" *Hand Hammered thin crash*, 14" *Hand Hammered thin crash*, 13" *Hand Hammered Sizzle Hats*, and 12" *Regular Hats*. At times I'll substitute an 18" *AAX Stage crash* and a 15" *Hand Hammered thin crash*. Even though there are several cymbals from one line, the sounds they produce are very different.

My ear for selecting cymbals was "awakened" by Roy Burns. Roy taught me that cymbals are a part of the drumset, not separate from it. Thus each cymbal in my setup should be as different as the tones in my drumset. The cymbals should blend with and complement the tones in the drumset, making it a complete instrument. The same is true of all the drumset components. Do they blend with and complement one another? This is all part of an area that many of us overlook: the sound of our instrument. Attention to this area is as important as having "chops," and is a big part of making music with the drums.

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volume II




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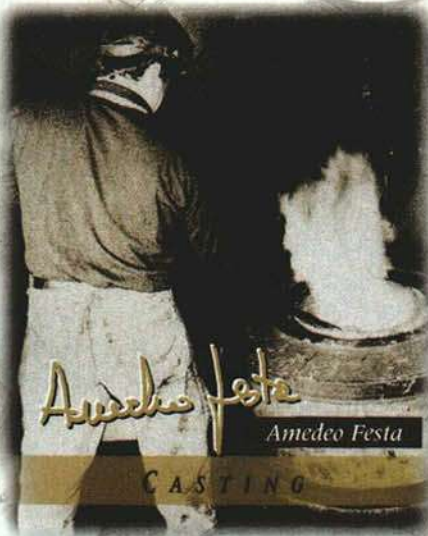
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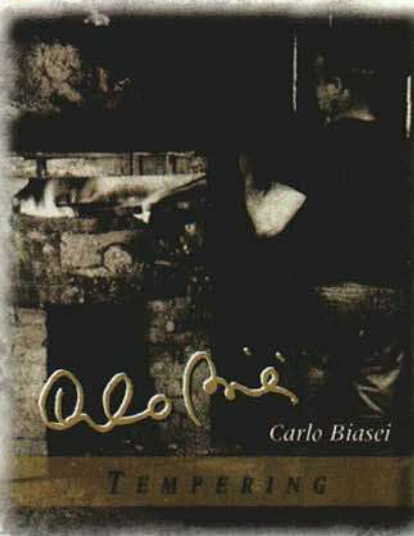
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Amedeo Festa

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Carlo Biasei

Carlo Biasei

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Damiano Tronci

Damiano Tronci

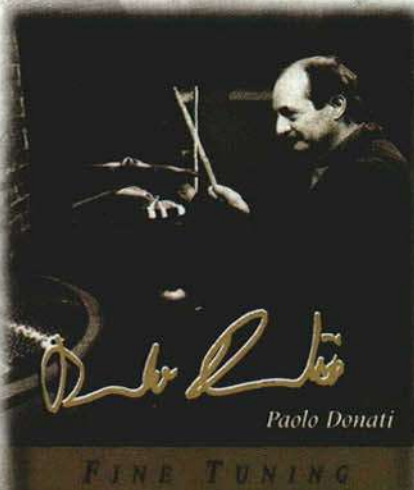
LATHING



Alberto Biasei

Alberto Biasei

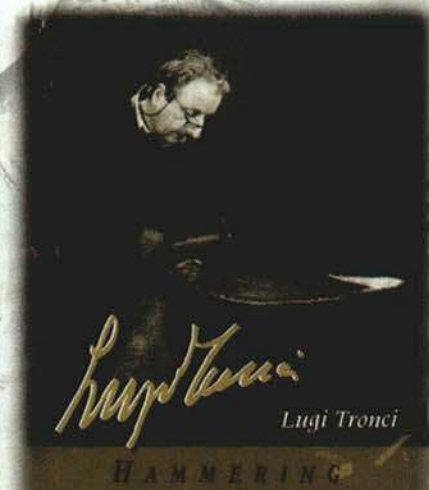
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Gruber On Video

Q In the January 1996 issue you had an article on Freddie Gruber in your *Teachers' Forum* department. He mentioned doing a video for DCI. Has that video been done? If not, do you know if he still plans to do one?

Kevin O'Neill
Columbus, OH

A Freddie was filmed "live" by DCI at a clinic he presented at the 1995 Percussive Arts Society Convention. The format, makes it more of a documentary of that clinic than a conventional "educational video." That video is in their catalog and is currently available. However, DCI informs us that another, more structured video is in the works.

Collected Lessons

Q Do you have a book that I can order that contains all of the lessons (or a collec-

tion of lessons) from previous magazine issues?

Scott Yang
via Internet

A Check out *The Best Of Modern Drummer: Rock* and *The Best Of MD: Volume 2*. Both are compilations of articles by top drummers and educators that appeared in previous issues of *Modern Drummer*. They're available through the MD Library; order forms are in most issues of MD.

Nashville Number System

Q Which back issue of MD contains an explanation of the Nashville "number system" of chart-reading?

Chad Norris
via Internet

A Country studio ace Tommy Wells explained the "number system" within his article "Nashville Studio Reading" in

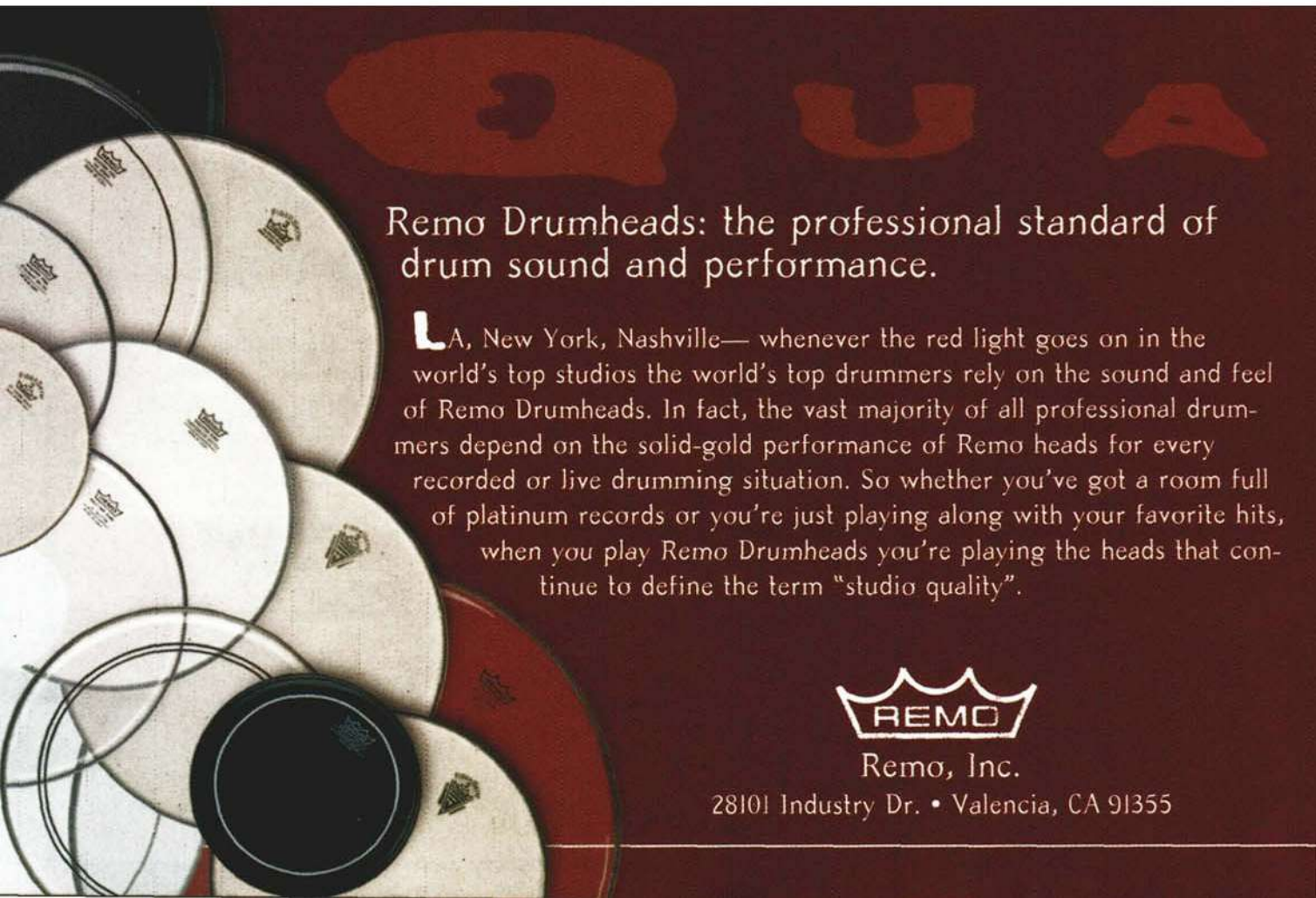
the December 1995 issue. Contact our back-issue department at (973) 239-4140 for ordering information.

Stewart's Ride

Q Can you tell me what kind of ride cymbal Stewart Copeland used during the early days of the Police? I am attempting to find a ride with a similar bell sound among both Paiste and Zildjian models, and I've been rather unsuccessful. I realize that the dynamics of the old recordings could add to the unique sound of the cymbal. However, it still seems that Stewart's ride has a very distinct sound when compared to currently produced rides. Any information you could give me about this subject would be greatly appreciated.


Jeff Haas
via Internet

A According to an equipment list given in our October 1982 issue by Jeff Seitz (who was Stewart's drum tech at that



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time), Stewart was using a 24" Paiste *Rude* ride, along with two 18" crash/rides, two 16" crash/rides, an 8" *Ice Bell*, 8" and 10" splash cymbals, 13" 2002 hi-hats, and a Chinese swish cymbal. At that time Paiste had only recently introduced the *Rude* models.

Double-Bass Options

Q I am looking for some information on the differences between playing two separate bass drums versus playing one drum with a double pedal. What do the two sound like, and what are their functions as they relate to drum playing? Are there any advantages or disadvantages to one system versus the other?

Gregory Matthews
via Internet

A Many drummers feel that two bass drums offer a bit more in the way of sonic potential, since they can be tuned slightly differently, or can even be of two different sizes. Others believe that two individual drums provide better drumhead response to pedal impact, because a single head cannot

recover quickly enough when struck rapidly by two beaters. Finally, there are those drummers who simply feel that two bass drums look more balanced (or perhaps suit the image of their band's musical personality better) than a single drum.

On the other hand, it's more expensive to add a second bass drum and a second single pedal than to purchase a double pedal alone. Two bass drums are more difficult to pack and carry than one bass drum. In some cases, a double-bass set can be more difficult to fit onto small stages than a single-bass kit. Additionally, some drummers want an identical sound from each bass drum beater impact, and this can sometimes be difficult to achieve with two separate drums.

Drumhead Choices

Q I am a teenage drummer. I play rock, and I am interested in what heads would sound best for me. They need to be able to cut it in the studio and live. They also need to have a nice sound.

Ricky Duke
via Internet

A Most hard-playing rock drummers favor two-ply heads for their durability and resilience. From that point, "a nice sound" is in the ear of the beholder. Clear heads will have a little more sustain; coated heads generally produce a little more stick attack. Dotted heads give even more protection, and can add to the attack sound, but may sound a little "flat" in terms of ring and resonance. Heads that include self-muffling features (such as "rings" of glue or additional drumhead material) tend to sound rounder and mellower than other twin-ply heads.

Excellent head choices are available from Aquarian, Attack, Evans, Ludwig, Pearl, Premier, Remo, and Sonor. Check out the selection in your local store, browse catalogs, and talk with the salespeople about your specific tastes in heads and drum sounds. Fortunately, it doesn't cost too much to experiment a bit with drumhead selection. Try a few different options.



John 'JR' Robinson

John "JR" Robinson

Snare	Emperor Coated w/Black Dot/Ambassador Snare
Bass	Ambassador Clear/Ambassador Clear w/hole
Toms	Emperor Coated/Ambassador Clear

Kenny Aronoff

Kenny Aronoff

Ambassador Coated/Ambassador Snare
Powerstroke 3 Clear/Ambassador Smooth White
Ambassador Coated/Ambassador Clear

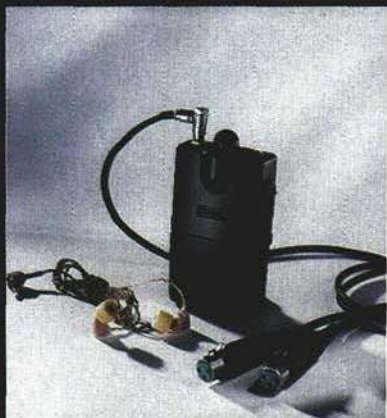
Eddie Bayers

Eddie Bayers

Ambassador Coated/Ambassador Snare
Emperor Clear/Emperor Clear w/hole
Ambassador Coated/Ambassador Clear

Stick It In Your Ear Shure Personal Monitor System

For drummers who wish to get on the in-ear monitoring bandwagon, Shure's new *PSM600* personal stereo monitor systems are available in both UHF wireless and wired versions. Said to be capable of delivering consistent, high-quality audio through new proprietary *EI* earpieces, each system incorporates body-pack functions that afford the performer direct control over volume, balance, and Shure's exclusive *MixMode* feature. This feature provides users with the option to send and receive a pair of mono mixes rather than just a single stereo mix. This enables the user to adjust his or her own volume relative to the rest of the mix.



Wired (left) and wireless versions of Shure's *PSM600* personal monitor system.

It's A Pad...It's A Drum...It's...? Concept One Pro-Line Series

Drummers who want to play electronics without giving up the look and feel of acoustic drums should check out Concept One's *Pro-Line* electronic drumkit. The company has taken the under-the-drumhead pad technology first introduced in their *Undercover* trigger series and installed it into 5"-deep drum shells. Sizes available are 8", 10", 12", 13", and 16" "snare" and "toms," and a 22" "bass drum." Five-piece configurations are available with rack, cables, and carrying cases, for a suggested retail price of \$1,800.

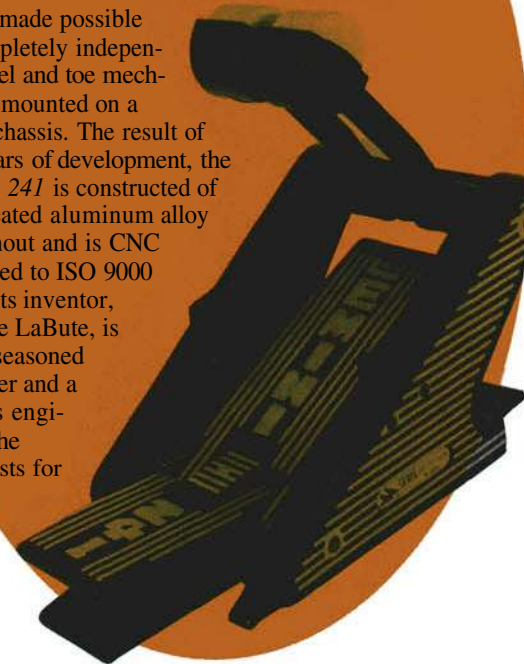


This *Pro-Line Plus* electronic pad set includes a 22" bass drum, 10", 12", and 16" tom pads, and a 13" snare pad.

Bass Drum On The Double Gemini Double Bass Drum Pedal

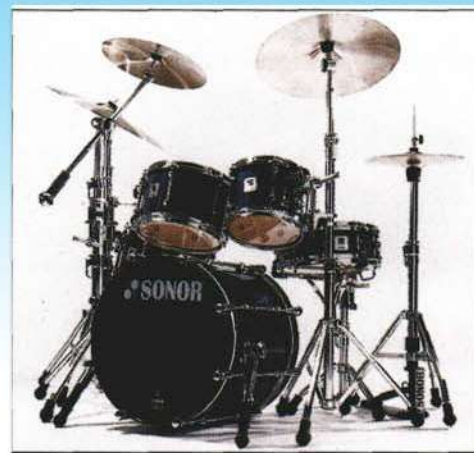
The Gemini 247 double bass drum pedal is designed to allow drummers to play double bass patterns with one foot (toe-to-heel) while providing complete hi-hat freedom for the other foot.

This is made possible by completely independent heel and toe mechanisms mounted on a single chassis. The result of five years of development, the Gemini 247 is constructed of heat-treated aluminum alloy throughout and is CNC machined to ISO 9000 specs. Its inventor, Maurice LaBute, is both a seasoned drummer and a robotics engineer. The pedal lists for \$495.



From Germany, With Love Sonor Designer Series Finishes, Sonic Plus Hardware Upgrades, and Pipe Band Snare Drum

High-gloss stain finishes in Sonor's *Designer Series* used to be available only on maple-shell drums. However, due to increased interest in birch shells, Sonor is now offering high-gloss cherry and azure (blue-green) finishes on *Designer* birch kits. The highly figured birch outer veneer combines with the stain to create a dramatic appearance.



Hardware elements of Sonor's recently introduced *S-Class* drumkit series have now been incorporated into the *Sonic Plus* series. These include an H-bar non-drilling tom-mounting system (replacing the previous T-bar design), and the use of a 19 mm tom-arm hole (compatible with all Sonor tom arms). These changes are said to improve the overall handling and stability of *Sonic Plus* drums.

Finally, Sonor has introduced the *MPD 1412 S*, a Scottish-style pipe band snare drum. Featuring a



steel shell and lugs attached with four bolts each, the drum is capable of withstanding the very high head tension used in pipe band, drum corps, and marching band activities.

Kick The Bottom Out Audix D4 Microphone

The newest addition to the Audix *D Series* is the *D4*, a dynamic hypercardioid mic' specifically tailored to capture the low frequencies and high sound pressure levels of bass drums—and still offer a compact size for easy placement. Only 1" wide and 4" long, the *D4* is said to capture a truer image of the original sound than previous kick mic's.

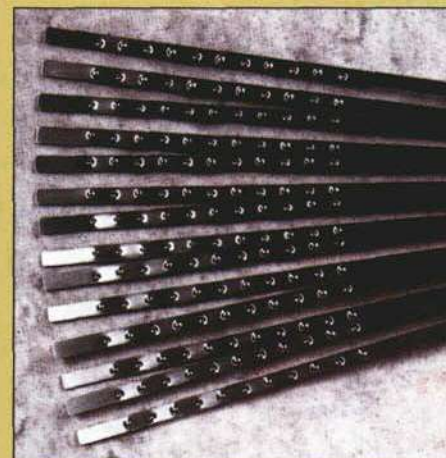
Frequency response is flat down to 63 Hz, with a slight "bump" at 80 Hz, and a gentle roll-off below 40 Hz. From 80 Hz up to 1 KHz, the *D4* is said to be "extremely linear." Applications besides kick drums include timpani, toms, piano, sax, and any other instrument requiring precise low-frequency reproduction. The mic' has a suggested retail price of \$289.



Shtix Of One And A Half Dozen Of The Other Marching Shtix

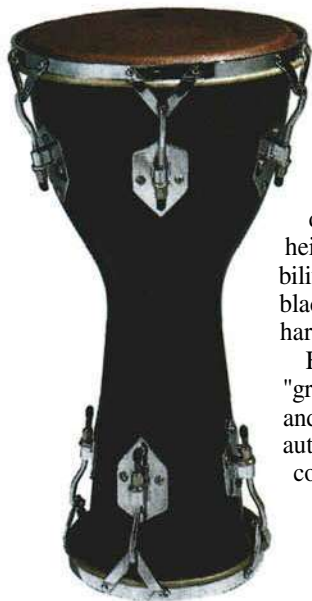
It's not a stick, it's not a mallet, and it's not a brush. So what *is Shtix*? It's a new implement to use on drums and cymbals in order to create totally new sounds.

Initially brush-like in its physical appearance, *Shtix* features playing fingers made of flat, thin strips of smooth stainless steel. The spread of these fingers can be adjusted (and locked) from a wide spread to a single, stick-like column for a variety of playing styles and sounds. The spring-action response of the fingers is said to make it possible for drummers to "easily control each stroke for clean, sharp playing and precise, articulate executions. Drumhead resonance is sharp and loud; cymbals ring crisp and bright." The marching version of *Shtix* is currently being used by a number of high-profile national drum corps; lighter-weight drum-set models are also available.



For All You Movers And Shakers Out There Toca Drums And Shekere

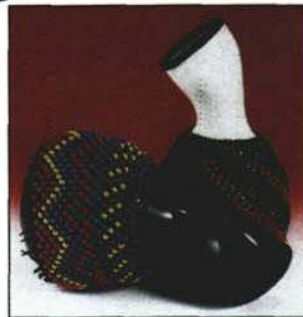
Toca Percussion has augmented its extensive instrument line with a professional-level *Rumba Timba* drum (below), an original design built with both African and Brazilian influences as an accompanying drum to the conga in the rumba rhythms of Cuba. The double-headed (8" and 13") wood-shell drum is played in a sitting position, bata style. It features traditional hoops, four-bolt tension-plate hardware, and a cherry lacquer finish, and retails at \$649.50.



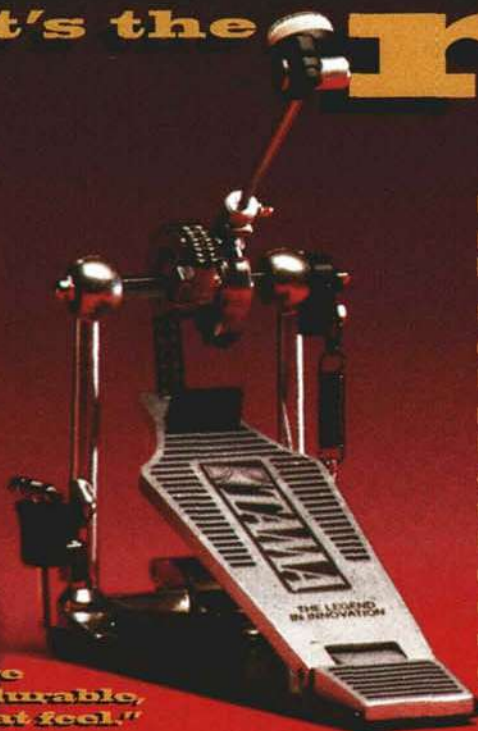
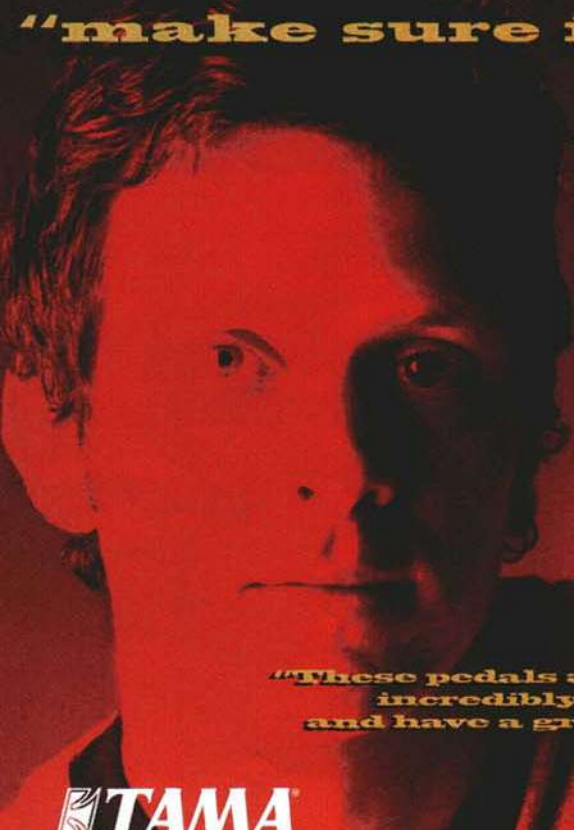
For those active in drum circles, Toca has created the *Synergy Series* of drums, including new *Circle Drums* (top right). Offered in 8", 10", and 12" head sizes, the drums feature straight-sided double-ply Asian oak shells with exact head-to-height ratios (said to give each drum a wide range of tuning possibilities). Each drum features heavy-duty chrome tension rods and black "easy-play" hoops. A natural wood finish complements the hardware combination.



Finally, Toca's new fiberglass shekere (bottom right) is said to offer a "great sound combined with excellent durability." The shape, weight, and wall thickness are copied from those of real gourds for acoustic authenticity. Black and white shekeres are available, each with its own colorful bead pattern.



"make sure it's the **rea**



"These pedals are
incredibly durable,
and have a great feel."

Milke Milenin

Goo Goo Dolls.

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And What's More...

XL Specialty Percussion has added two bongo cases to its *Protechtor* line of drum cases. Both models are manufactured in *Protechtor's* one-piece roto-molded design for strength, water resistance, and durability. Both the 4307 and 4307D models will fit most professional-size bongos, including those with rubber feet and "hand saver" rims. The 4307D offers an insert tray that can hold various accessories, such as timbale sticks, cowbells, etc. Both models feature rivetless handles molded into the case top, and nylon straps with quick-release buckles. Cases are available in black, royal blue, cherry red, electric yellow, turquoise green, citrus orange, and vibrant purple.



Kick'N Brass, created by drummer Jeff Slamal, is said to clean and polish cymbals in seconds. The non-abrasive cleaner is claimed to remove all oxidation, stick marks, and oily prints and to bring cymbals back to their original luster with little effort. It will also clean brass, bronze, copper, magnesium, and brushed aluminum. An 8-ounce bottle sells for \$9.95 at retail stores, or can be ordered direct from the manufacturer (Resource) for an additional \$3 for shipping and handling.

Meinl Percussion has announced the re-introduction of *Woodcraft* congas. Each drum is made in Germany of specially selected German oak, is equipped with high-quality heads from the *True Skin* range, and is fitted with a traditional tuning system utilizing deep-set hoops. Sizes available are 11" (\$900), 11 3/4" (\$950), and 12 1/2" (\$1,000), in four wood finishes.

Rolling Thunder is a company dedicated to the manufacture and promotion of taiko drums and drumming. In addition to Rolling Thunder's own line of drums, the company imports Japanese taiko drums, produces an instructional video series, and runs a Web-based taiko resource. Their newest offering is a fully bilingual CD-ROM called *The Taiko*, produced by the Japanese company Parcwave. Created in conjunction with Asano Taiko, a taiko maker with over 400 years of drum-making tradition, this CD-ROM provides detailed information about taiko for the first time in this format. *The Taiko* also contains two audio tracks that can be played in any audio CD player.



1 iron cobra''



Making Contact

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Concept One

PO Box 244
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(608)648-2397

Gemini Percussion Systems

Box 22052 Forest Glade PO
Windsor, Ontario
Canada N8R 2H5
(800)205-8147

Meinl Percussion

20301 Elkwood St.
Canoga Park, CA 91306
(818)772-6543

Resource

3302 Felisa Court
Riverside, CA 92509
tel: (888) 658-7046 or (909) 681-5492
e-mail: slamal@earthlink.net

Rolling Thunder

389 Laurelwood
Santa Clara, CA 95054
tel: (408) 247-5662, fax: (408) 554-1868
web: www.taiko.com

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tel: (847) 866-2200, fax: (847) 866-2279

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Toca Percussion (Kaman Music Corp.)

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GMS Grand Master Series Drums

by Rich Watson

This small, custom drum maker appears headed for the majors.

Since *MD* last looked at GMS drums (February '95), the company has really come of age in a couple of respects: First, GMS recently ended their distribution deal with Paiste, evincing sufficient confidence in their product to "work without a net," and the number of

dealers carrying GMS has grown faster than for any other custom drum maker except Ayotte. Second, the Farmingdale, New York-based company is celebrating their tenth anniversary—no small feat in the world of sadly here-today, gone-tomorrow "boutique

brand" (i.e., smaller, custom-work) firms. And finally, GMS has begun to garner drumming community attention with such high-profile endorsers as jazzier John Riley, Stone Temple Pilots' Eric Kretz, Genesis's Nir Z, Candlebox's Scott Mercado, and Fates Warning's Mark Zonder.

Leading the company's growth are their flagship *Grand Master Series* drums. So let's take a look at what's behind all the commotion.

Basics

The review set differs from most kits appearing in *Product Close-Up* both in configuration—one rack tom and two floor toms—and drum sizes—5x14, 11x13, 16x16, 16x18, and 16x24. (This is one big kit.) All GMS toms

WHAT'S HOT

- superior workmanship, inside and out
- smooth, reliable snare throw-off
- killer bass drum sound





GMS Suspension System floor tom mount

are equipped with Evans coated *G1s* on top and clear *G1s* on the bottom. Bass drums get the Evans *EQ* system, and snares have a coated *G1* on top and a 300-gauge snare bottom. All snare drums have 20-strand, heat-treated, high-carbon-steel snare wire. Standard hoops are 2.3 mm triple-flanged steel. Die-cast hoops for 14" snare drums are available for an additional \$160 per drum.

Shells

Grand Master Series drum shells are made of select 8-ply North American maple—pretty much the material of choice in high-end drums these days. GMS had experimented with different shell thicknesses, but concluded that for their acoustic goals, the 1/4", 8-ply design is thin enough to produce a low fundamental pitch on the larger drums, yet strong and thick enough to transmit the fast, complex vibrations created by playing at higher dynamic levels without the use of reinforcement rings. They contend that these rings, which resonate at a different frequency than the thinner portion of a shell, inhibit its ability to resonate as a single, sonorous unit.

The review kit's 45° bearing edges were perfectly flat, smooth, and even, and the plies were impeccably joined and sealed. The inside of the shells, even around the tension casing mounting hardware, reminded me of the clean, smooth finish on pricey Scandinavian furniture. Just from a visual standpoint, this is good ol' American small-shop workmanship at its finest.

Hardware

One of the clearest distinguishing features of *Grand Master Series* drums is their unique lug design. Small, square-ish lugs are each attached to the shell with a single Allen bolt, which GMS founder and president Rob Mazzella tells me were chosen because they "torque up" better than conventional-headed fasteners, and in the case of external hardware such as a snare throw-off, they avert the tragedy of a screwdriver slipping and scarring a shell's finish. The lug's size and positioning quite near the bearing edge follow the current wisdom for maximizing shell resonance. The top and bottom lugs are connected by a long brass rod. This connection is structural, not just cosmetic: Each rod serves as a vertical support that counters the natural tendency of the lugs to pull outward, away from the shell, under tension. The rod thus minimizes resonance-restricting stress exerted on the shell.

Key rod receptors swivel to accommodate slight variations in key rod angle. This accomplishes the same goal as potentially noisy spring-loaded lugs—ensuring proper tension rod/casing alignment—but *without springs*, thank you very much.

All the component parts of GMS lugs are made by GMS, not outsourced, and not imported. Also, they are machined, not cast, from solid brass. This much more difficult and costly process resulted from a very "sound" choice: The cheeky folks at GMS point out that for many years musical instruments have been made of brass because of its musical quality—then quickly ask: "Ever seen a cast saxophone? Or one made of steel?" Further, GMS machines a different-sized lug for each size of drum. If this and numerous other manufacturing practices defy all the efficiencies and frugality of mass production, they are consistent with a design and workmanship philosophy that seems to spit in the eye of everything that is fast, cheap, and easy.

The *GMS Suspension System* consists of a T-shaped assembly secured by two of the tom's key rods on top and a stabilizing clip on the bottom hoop. The mount's tom bracket, again, is made from solid brass, by GMS. Rubber bumpers at the contact points prevent buzz and enhance the suspension effect. Like other tom suspension devices, the GMS system eliminates a large hole in the rack tom shell required to accommodate the "intrusive" type of mount, and it transfers the stress from the shell to multiple points along the top rim. This maximizes the drum's sustain and minimizes tonal distortions and choking of certain harmonic elements of its sound.

Grand Master Series kits also employ special floor tom leg mounts that clamp onto the drum's bottom rim. This miniature version of the rack tom mount eliminates the need for three large, vibrationally "grounded" hunks of metal to be bolted through the shell.

Rack mounting hardware includes a hexagonal spanner crossbar



GMS Suspension System rack tom mount

(available in lengths of 28", 36", 40", and 48"), two clamps to mount it to cymbal stands (not supplied), and a third for the tom holder, whose simple design incorporates an L-arm with a key-tightened memory-lock nut to help prevent it from rotating out of position on the rod. Kits with either of the two larger-sized bars (such as the one reviewed) include a fourth clamp for an additional cymbal or tom. The bar's hexagonal shape offers better freedom from slippage than round bars, and greater positioning flexibility than square ones. Depending on your preferred relative positioning of the tom and cymbal, the tom mount arm and a smaller, lighter single rack tom could probably be mounted directly onto a sturdy, heavy-based cymbal

stand, forgoing the crossbar entirely for a simpler, cleaner look. However, the provided 11x13 tom benefited from the more stable two-sided support. And for larger setups, the bar makes plenty of sense, avoiding floor-space clutter around the bass drum—especially a large bass drum like the one reviewed. (Another *MD* editor uses a GMS spanner bar for his three rack toms, and he loves it.)

The *Grand Master* snare drum throw-off, almost entirely made of hand-machined brass, allows snare tension adjustment while the snares are engaged. A nylon locknut prevents the mechanism from loosening due to vibration. (GMS claims that a worn locknut can be replaced by the user in about ninety seconds.) The throw-off's action was silky, and its tension remained constant even when left quite loose and under some high-volume pounding.

For bass drum tensioning, the *Grand Masters* use key rods, generally preferred over T-rods for their finer tuning capability.

Sound

When reviewing an instrument as multi-faceted and acoustically complex as a drumset, it's next to impossible to nail down specific design features responsible for particular sonic properties. But whether it's the *Grand Master's* unique lug design, suspension systems, brass vs. steel hardware, shell configuration, intensive quality control, or, most likely, a combination of all of these factors, these puppies sound fantastic!

Apropos for its very large drums, the *Grand Master* review kit produced one *huge* sound. While their tone was harmonically balanced, the toms—even the 16x18—sounded fairly bright, regardless of how they were tuned. This is not only my personal preference, but it is generally considered more practical and flexible: You can darken a drum's sound, if necessary, with a bit of muffling or with certain types of heads, but going the other way—defeating low frequencies—is much more difficult without electronic EQ, and usually ends up detracting from the overall drum sound.

As rich and resonant as the *Grand Masters* were, I was surprised that the toms' tuning range wasn't broader. The 13" tom in particular didn't take kindly to a higher, small-group jazz tuning. (Then



GMS snare strainer

again, expecting this from a drum this deep is probably a bit like asking a dog to climb a tree.) The 16" tom adapted a little more readily, but then its pitch relationship with the other two toms was off. The optimum tonal synergy among the toms was achieved when all were tuned low. In this range, the floor toms (and here I will venture a guess: due to the GMS floor tom suspension system) sustained *for days*, including their lowest frequencies. This characteristic is especially nice under close-miking situations in the studio. The snare, on the other hand, shined in the highs and upper-midrange, producing a moderate, controlled ring, and powerful, meaty rimshots. The kick opened up to a shock-waving *basso profundo* in the subterranean region.

I had the opportunity to hear the review set in a large room at the New York Drum Expo late last year. They were exhibited amidst just about every major brand, and in my opinion—and in the opinion of several unbiased listeners I spoke to—the GMS drums were the best of the bunch. I also heard a more conventionally configured GMS set (in champagne painted sparkle!) at the summer NAMM show. There, too, all the drums sounded great, and the kick in particular was an awesome thing to behold.

Aesthetics

GMS's shell finishing process is too involved to discuss here, but the cartwheels they turn produce some breathtaking results. GMS offers high-gloss stained or painted finishes in "just about any color," as well as fades, "bursts," and even graphics. An equal variety of painted, faded, and "burst" sparkles provide the visual impact of sparkle, but without the deleterious acoustic properties of wrapped plastic. Oil finishes are available by special order.

Another of *MD's* editors was put off by each drum's "big square badge." While I wasn't quite repelled by it, I did wonder if the unique design of the *Grand Master* hardware alone might be sufficiently identifiable to allow the use of a less conspicuous logo badge. The drums' splendid finish begs not to be covered.

Although, as I mentioned, the review kit had already been around the block a few times, its three-tone *Tobacco Burst* finish, like a showroom-fresh *Les Paul*, was still gorgeous. A couple of

design elements indicate that GMS's priority is, as it should be, the drums' sound: While the vertical rods running between lugs have a warm, brassy glow of their own, they visually divide the rich, dark color of the shell. Similarly, the tom suspension system and snare drum throw-off/butt system look a bit utilitarian—as opposed to formed (read: cast) and curvy. Although these features would better appeal to an engineer than an interior decorator, the overall visual impact of the *Grand Masters* is positive and striking.

Conclusion

Grand Master Series drums are far from cheap. But by custom

drum standards—and in light of GMS's extravagant design and materials choices—it's a wonder they don't cost much more. Drums are priced a la carte; the total price of the drums reviewed is \$5,705. Standard five-piece configurations start at around \$5,050. If you are looking for unsurpassed, "small-shop" workmanship, exquisite finishes, great sustain, and a big open sound, make an extra effort to track down and listen to the fittingly named *Grand Masters*. It will be worth the trip. For more information, contact GMS, 855-C Conklin Street, Farmingdale, NY 11735, tel: (516) 293-4235, fax: (516) 293-4246.

Paiste Line Traditional Cymbals

by Rich Watson

These are not your father's Paiste cymbals!

You think you know Paiste cymbals, right? I thought I did: Crisp, nigh on brittle. Laser-focused. Clean-cum-sanitized harmonic content. Well, they still do all that—probably better than anyone. But lo and behold, they've begun doing something else—and they're doing it *very, very well*.

Never prone to toddling down the middle of the road, Paiste has always swaggered up the one-way specialty lanes, mostly steering hard toward the bright, fast, primary colors of the timbral spectrum. Then came their *Paiste Line Signature* series, which shattered a few preconceptions with a sound that was more complex and, to my ear, more interesting and musical than that of their previous creations. Now, with the *Paiste Line Traditional*

WHAT'S HOT

- harmonically rich
- dark, dark, dark
- medium ride has virtually irrepressible stick sound



series, which Paiste says is aimed at "re-creating the cymbal sounds of the '40s, '50s, and '60s—the golden age of blues, jazz, big band, and bebop," the great alpine cymbal-smiths have taken a hard left for the soft, warm, and washy opposite shoulder of what has traditionally been "K" Street. And to my surprise, they're driving like they've always known the way. Let's tag along.

A Smooth, Comfortable Ride

The trend in ride cymbals of late has been away from the pure and pingy, and toward a discernable stick sound with a varying complement of undertones. Paiste has weighed in with the dark (medium ride), darker (medium light ride), and darkest (light ride), muskiest, sweet-n-funkiest rides this side of a Saturday night's final set at Birdland in 1956.

Although Paiste also offers the light ride and medium light ride *Traditionals* in 22" models, all three rides sent for review were 20". The medium ride produced a moderate buildup and a clean, throaty stick attack that surfed three or four pitches above the substantial wash. I had to really beat on this sucker to bury the stick sound, which for me makes it the most potentially versatile of the line in terms of the musical styles it would flourish in. For its woody, organic quality, this cymbal was my favorite of the lot, and I won't be at all surprised if it fails to make it into the box headed back to Paiste.

Both the medium light ride and the light ride exhibited a lush, golden spread, and both (especially the light ride) retained their stick articulation best with smaller-tipped sticks; larger tips accelerated their overtone buildup. Predictably, nylon tips brought out more high frequencies, and thus raised the speed/dynamic threshold at which the harmonic undertow swallowed up the attack sound. Because this threshold is quite low in the light ride, I would recommend it only for lower-volume live playing, or for the studio, where its definition could be picked up even amidst a louder band's volume and/or the cymbal's own wash generated by harder playing.

Because they are thin and relatively lightweight, the medium light and light rides seem to yield slightly to the impact of the stick, giving the impression that I was playing "into" them, as opposed to "on" them. The effect (which was minimal on the medium ride model) was generally pleasurable, although I felt like the light ride didn't facilitate fast stick work as well as a heavier, more rigid ride.

Harkening back to the days when drummers used only a couple of cymbals for all their tonal needs, all of Paiste's *Traditional* rides—even the medium ride—proved quite serviceable as crashes. (In the case of the medium ride, this was despite its resilient



stick sound.) Again and again their musical reply lured me to use them for incidental stick-shoulder punctuations in the middle of a swing pattern—a technique for which my own, thicker "medium" ride would severely punish all listeners. This cross-functionality stepped all over my preconception that Paiste cymbals are functionally one-dimensional.

One thing you shouldn't look for in the entire *Traditional* ride corral is a strong bell sound. Their bells are fine for pretty, tinkly effects, but they don't have the *cajones* for riding in anything but the lightest Latin or rock contexts.

It's a stupid, immature fallacy that drumming gear has any real effect on one's ability to play, so what I'm about to tell you I will adamantly deny later: I took a few of the *Traditionals* to a rehearsal and was soon playing with a better jazz feel than I had in years. I'm not saying I actually *swung*, mind you, but hey, these babies got me in the neighborhood—and certainly in the mood—for playing some serious jazz. And I wasn't the only one who was impressed. Normally I would dismiss any drumming-related opinions expressed by a *guitar player*, but when my bassist agreed with him that these cymbals—especially the medium ride—sounded like the real jazz McCoy, I knew Paiste had hit the bull's-eye.

Soft Crashes And A Sophisticated Splash

It's in the *Traditional* crashes that Paiste has clearly discovered the power of the dark side. We're talking heart of Africa here—at half-past midnight. The models sent for review included 14", 16", and 18" thin crashes, 16" and 18" extra-thin crashes, and an 11" splash.

None of the crashes could be described as "powerful"; Paiste was obviously going more for "expressive" than "explosive." Even when fully clobbered, both the 16" and 18" extra-thin crashes gave a satisfying *pawhhh*. Although a thin cymbal normally "gets into motion" quickly, the low fundamental pitch of these

cymbals gives the impression of a relatively slow attack. All had a predictably fast decay. For my personal taste and the sonic role I expect a crash cymbal to play, the *Traditional* 14" thin crash and 16" extra-thin crash were a bit *too* dark and *too* slow. But I can imagine that in the proper setting they would contribute to an interesting and affecting sonic palette.

Like the *Traditional* rides, the 16" and 18" thin crashes pulled credible double duty: In the context of a light jazz dynamic, both worked well as alternate rides. All of the crashes—and especially the 14" and 16" models—also facilitated smooth, easy mallet swells.

The 11" splash's sound had a gorgeous, almost China-like expanding quality. Although it was fast enough to distinguish itself as a splash, it too seemed to respond slower than most splashes. Similarly, when choked it lacked the humorous element often associated with that effect, as if it was too dignified for such *schtick*.

One of my Paiste prejudices that was *reaffirmed* relates to their inter-range consistency: The different sizes of each crash model sounded too similar for me to want them in the same setup. Preferring a broader variety of distinct colors, I'd be more inclined to mix and match, say, a thin 18" and an extra-thin 16". The splash, on the other hand, complemented any combination.

Nice, Warm Hats

The *Traditional* medium light hi-hats suggest a kind of metallurgical inter-cultural marriage. The top cymbal is thin and bronzy. The thick, dark brown, deeply hammered, but completely unlathed bottom cymbal looks like a miniature version of Paiste's *Dry Dark Ride*. Strange as it may seem, though, their union is a happy one, producing a lovely, mellow "chick" sound. When played on the bow with the stick's tip, the result is semi-bright. And on the edge with the shoulder of the stick, it's warm and superbly blended. When struck in the open position and instantly closed—the technique often called a "bark"—they instead produced a more subtle "chup" sound. Like the rest of the series, the *Traditional* hats are probably best suited to moderate- to low-volume situations.

A Touch Of Class

A cymbal's appearance may seem irrelevant, but I have to briefly comment on the look of the *Traditional* line. Once you get past the soft, burnished glow of their slightly (and appropriately) darker bronze, the pronounced hammer marks, and the attractive wavy lathed/unlathed concentric pattern on their underside, you will probably note that something is missing: a big, garish imprint (ADVERTISEMENT) of the manufacturer, line, model, logo, size, country of origin, alloy composition, shipping clerk's birth weight, or other information invaluable to the drummer who plays them. Instead, one word, "Paiste," is engraved tastefully on the top of each cymbal, and its identifying particulars are printed discreetly on the bottom. This seems fitting for the cool-jazz persona and vibe of these cymbals. Like the musicians of the era they embody, Paiste is relying on *Traditionals'* sound alone to sell them.

New And Old Impressions

Although I've experienced a couple of revelations while reviewing the *Traditional* cymbal line, one of my longstanding impressions about Paiste remains intact: They make instruments for highly specific tonal applications: Sonically speaking, they don't beat around the bush. As a result, *Traditionals* won't be the right cymbals for everyone—although it's hard for me to imagine that drummers from any genre wouldn't appreciate the *Traditionals'* beautiful, musical cymbal sounds. (If you have far too much time on your hands, read through this review again and count the number of times I used the word "musical.") And if you *do* play jazz in any of its many forms (or you want to stretch another genre's current cymbal-sound boundaries) you just gotta see how good they make *you* sound.

The *Traditional* series cymbals reviewed here are currently available from Paiste. Other models will be made available throughout the next several months, including the *Thin Ride*, the *Medium Light China*, and the *Swish*. In addition, Paiste will make additional sizes of the models reviewed available in the next few months. Retail prices for the cymbals reviewed are as follows: 20" rides—\$398; 11" splash—\$192; 14" hi-hats—\$464 per pair; 14" crash—\$232; 16" crashes—\$292; 18" crashes—\$348. For more information, contact Paiste America, Inc., 460 Atlas Street, Brea, CA 92621.



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Hand Hammered

Heavily hand hammered raw bronze delivers rapid response and hot, dark and dry definition.
Sizes: 20", 22"



HH VINTAGE RIDE

Hand Hammered

Big on volume, fat with tone, this wide-open and crashy ride sound is today's hippest from the past.
Size: 21"



HH BRIGHT HATS

Hand Hammered

Quick, cutting and tonally cool, this heavier weight pairing is the brightest sound in Hand Hammered hats.
Sizes: 13", 14"



HH DUO SPLASH

Hand Hammered

Combines hot breathiness with raw bite, for a darker, highly direct and impact-making 'splashy' response.
Size: 10"



HH DUO HATS

Hand Hammered

Light combination is quick to respond with dark, shimmering tone, direct definition and warm, soulful character.
Size: 14"



HH DUO CRASH

Hand Hammered

Rapid, mid-pitched attack is dry and warm with semi-lathed surface controlling spread and sustain.
Size: 16"



AAX DARK CRASH

AAX

Dramatically dark with a dry, smooth decay, this is an impactful and moody cymbal with definite presence.
Sizes: 14", 16", 18"



AA FAST CRASH

AA

Super-fast and explosive, this model cuts with an air-splitting energy that's crucial for maximum impact.
Size: 17"



AA MINI FUSION HATS

AA

Fun and funky heavy-weight pairing delivers maximum cut and precision in main or x-hat applications.
Size: 10"



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Definitely bright and powerful medium weight explodes with crisp, cutting and solid power.
Sizes: 16", 17", 18"



Jack DeJohnette

JACK DEJOHNETTE ENCORE

Signature Series

Mini-bell design enhances rapid stick response with spread-controlled blend of warm, simmering tone.
Size: 22"



Will Calhoun

WILL CALHOUN RIDE

Signature Series

Uniquely natural mix of full-range tonality is reinforced by dynamic and solid, well-defined sticking response.
Size: 21"



WILL CALHOUN MAD HATS

Signature Series

Crunching combination delivers a crisp, funky, and unbiased mix of low, mid, and high tonalities.
Size: 14"



WILL CALHOUN ALIEN DISC

Signature Series

Spacey effect of solid bronze pierced with sizzling rivets is a funky piece of sound in any setup.
Size: 10"



HORACIO

"EL NEGRO"

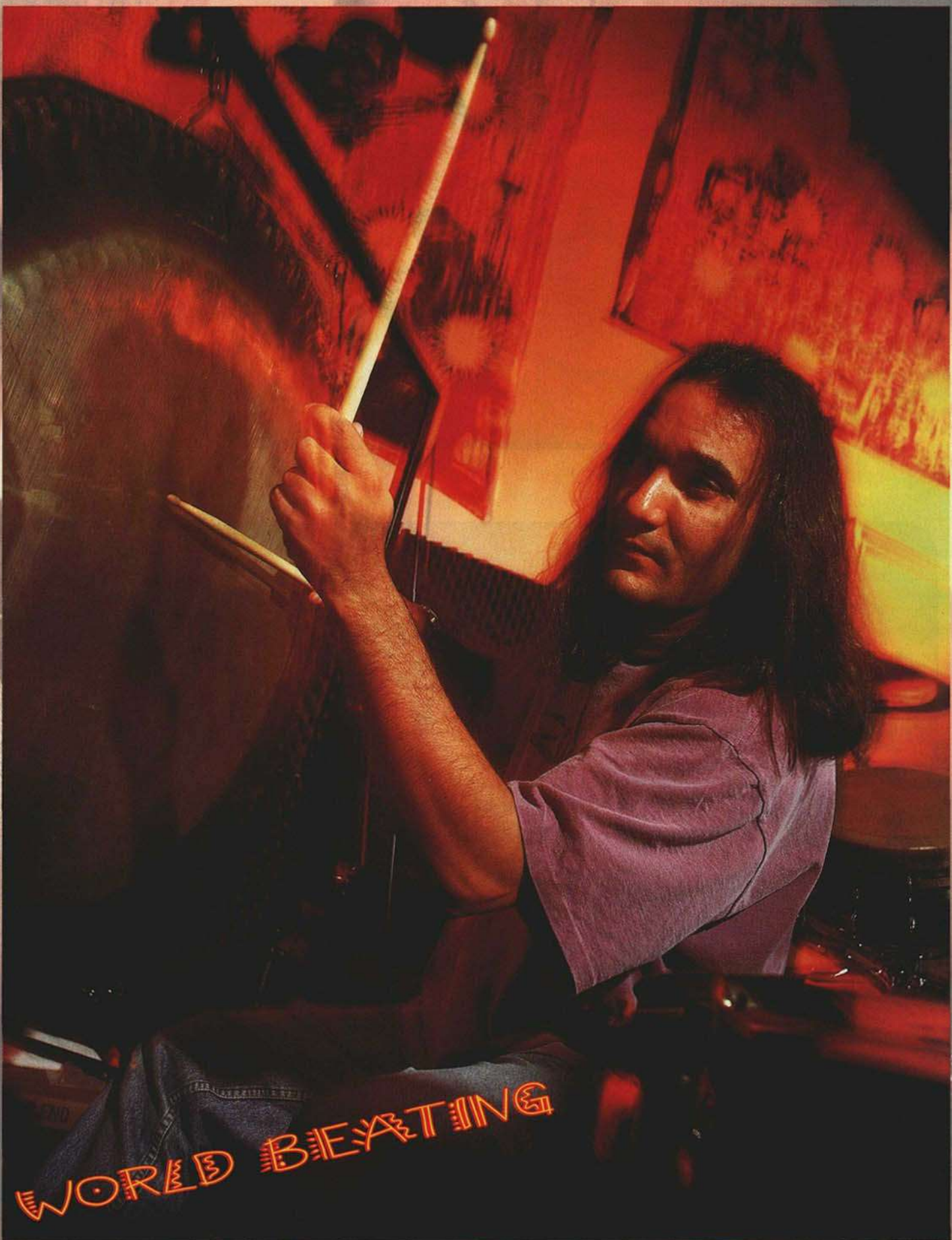
It's one of the first rehearsals for Santana with their new drummer, the monstrous Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez. The band is working through one of its classic tunes, and as the deep groove intensifies, Hernandez seems to grow two extra arms and legs, playing a dizzying combination of cowbells, toms, and splashes on *top* of the central drumset foundation. Nodding his head in approval is Carlos Santana, whose neck suddenly arches as he rips the feedback from his guitar and then points heavenward. Feeling the syncopated beat offered up by the new drummer, percussionist Raul Rekow smiles broadly as he pounds his massive hands on the congas. The band is reaching a new level of rhythmic intensity, thanks to "El Negro."

Hernandez is in California rehearsing with Santana, having arrived from New York City...by way of Rome...by way of Havana. Horacio's globe-trotting recent past is certainly fitting; his worldly beats signify an important fusion of the Afro-Cuban drumset/percussion tradition that was begun half a century ago in Havana by Candido and Walfredo Reyes, Sr. with the steamy brew of jazz, funk, rock, and fusion that was sent into Cuba via Miami radio stations.

"In Santana you do not have to play," smiles Hernandez, whose newly dyed bright-red hair is a symbol of the freedom he feels with the band. Actually, El Negro is doing a *lot* of playing in the group, alongside veteran percussionists Raul Rekow and Karl Perazzo. "Raul has a power that I've never heard anybody play with. And he and Karl have it down as to how to integrate Afro-Cuban music with rock. I'm in heaven listening to all these sounds. And nobody has to say anything to me about what to play. It's in the air, obvious, 'What is great is that everybody is into it. Everything is growing at the same time. It's like a rocket: All of a sudden—*bang!*—it goes straight to the moon.'"

by Robin Tolleson

photos by Jay Blakesberg

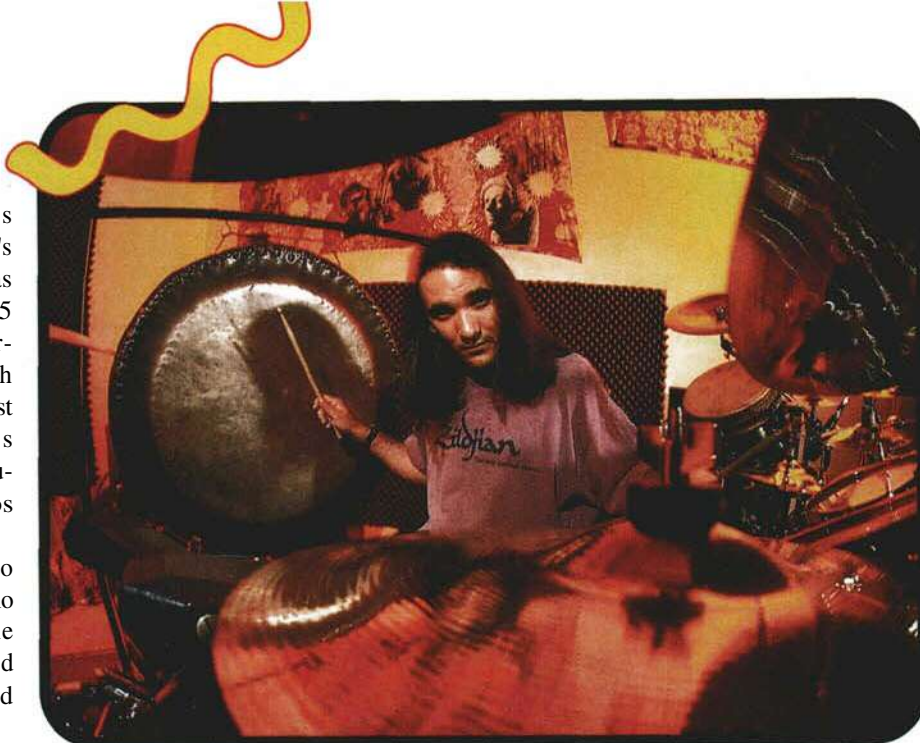


Carlos Santana's attraction to Horacio's playing was just as immediate. In 1995 the drummer performed a concert with the band Irakere West at San Francisco's Great American Music Hall, and Carlos was the guest star.

The guitarist was so impressed with Horacio that when the time came to form a band for his 1997 world

tour, Santana *knew* who he wanted.

Besides doing an extensive tour with Santana and recording a new album (due out soon), Horacio hopes to complete a method book for drummers on independence. He also has an educational video in the works with bassist John Patitucci that will be released by DCI.



"I DID OVER THREE HUNDRED RECORDS FOR CUBAN ARTISTS—JUST RECORDING AND RECORDING. I'D LOOK AT MYSELF IN THE MIRROR AND THINK I WAS THE CUBAN STEVE GADD!"



It's hard for many of us to imagine being detained for two weeks by the authorities at the age of thirteen for playing "the music of the enemy," or attending a school where congas and timbales are banned for political reasons. Nor is it likely many of us have been refused food for being of the wrong political party, followed by a government agent whenever we stepped over the border, or denied entrance to the country we wanted to visit. But these situations were all a part of the musical journey of Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez. His name may be new to many, but that says more about the sorry nature of international politics than it does about the musical track record of this thirty-three-year-old marvel of independence.

"Set-drum playing in Cuba, with the marriage of jazz and Cuban music, began in the pre-Castro days, and one of the guys who really knows about that is Horacio," says Walfredo Reyes Sr., the "left foot clave" pioneer who was mixing drumkit and percussion in Havana in the early 1950s. "I saw Horacio play with Gonzalo Rubalcaba's first group, and I was amazed. The evolution of music in Cuba has really

"I THINK THAT LEARNING TO PLAY LEFT-FOOT CLAVE WITHIN THE RHYTHM IS MORE OF A MELODIC THAN A RHYTHMIC PROCESS. YOU'RE CREATING ANOTHER MELODY WITH YOUR FOOT AND TRYING TO CONNECT ALL THE MELODIES TO IT. I DON'T THINK OF IT AS A SEPARATE THING."

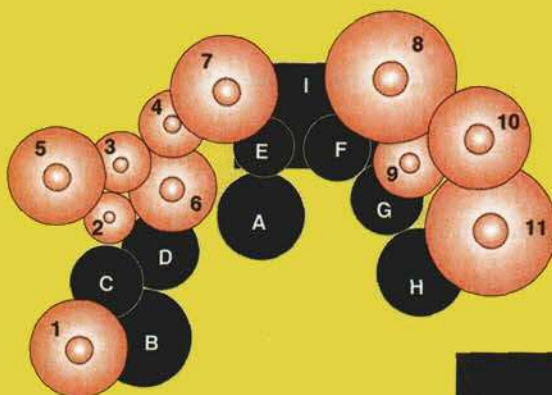
picked up. I think Horacio is one of the finest young drummers in the business right now."

Three of the recordings that clearly showcase Horacio's growing talent and versatility are with Cuban pianist Rubalcaba and his group Proyecto. (Previously available only as imports, all are now distributed in the US by Rounder Records.) *Live In Havana* (1986) began to establish Rubalcaba's group internationally as a Cuban version of Weather Report. *Mi Gran Pasion*

(1987) is an inventive session imbued with the Cuban musical traditions. And *Giraldilla* (1989) is full of remarkable world-fusion tracks, recorded in Germany one year before Hernandez defected to Italy.

Hernandez had hoped to move to New York quickly, but legal hassles persisted for three years. The US embassy told him there were enough musicians in the United States already, and that he was free enough in Italy. The drummer found plenty of work in Rome, though, with the likes of Pino Danielle, Gary Bartz, and Steve Turre, and he formed his own band,

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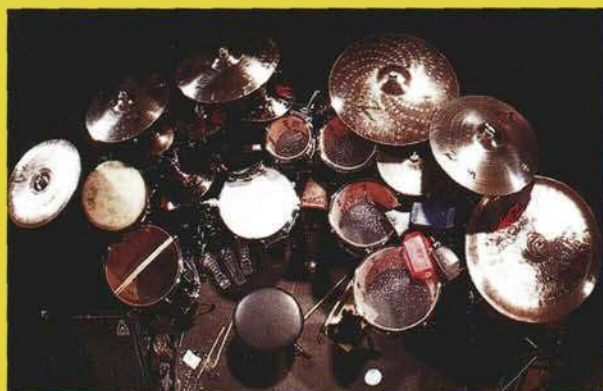
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After seizing an opportunity to move

and had to turn the gigs down. He became a club musician in New York, and found work on album projects with Ed Simon, Victor Mendoza, and David Sanchez. He played on *Paquito D'Rivera Presents 40 Years*

Horacio Hernandez is currently working on a book about independence. Here are some of his thoughts about that, and an introductory exercise, compliments of "El Negro."

"This all relates to Afro-Cuban music and the use of clave with things like the mambo-bell and the bongo-bell patterns. Once you learn those types of exercises, you need to play something with triplets or other rhythms to improvise with the other hand. Your goal should be to improvise over and within a pattern.

"The following is a basic clave coordination exercise for your hands. By mastering this you'll be taking the first steps to understanding the relationship between binary and ternary rhythms in Afro-Cuban music. Play the clave pattern with one hand while playing the other rhythms against it. Try to become familiar with the feel and sound of the different rhythmic relationships. Be sure to reverse the hands, playing the clave with your 'opposite' hand and the melody with the other."



Of Cuban Jam Sessions for TropiJazz, and became a favorite drummer for that label. He jams with some of the giants on *TropiJazz All Stars*, swings gracefully with Tito Puente's Latin Jazz Ensemble and vocalist India on *Jazzin'*, and displays his astounding percussion/kick ideas—with his amazing left-foot clave technique—on pianist Michel Camilo's new *Through My Eyes*. "Important" is the word that comes to mind when hearing "El Negro."

RT: I understand you flew to Miami to record *Paquito D'Rivera Presents 40 Years Of Cuban Jam Sessions* the day after arriving in the US in 1993.



HH: That was just what I was looking for. There was no rehearsal, it was straight into the studio. It was a jam with a lot of great musicians involved. And besides being a great musician, as a conductor Paquito has the grace to get the best out of people.

RT: That CD starts out like a concert band, then goes into the groove, and then comes back. Is that like a Cuban jam session?

HH: It's exactly like that. Somebody brings a theme, a blues form or something, and then "Let's go!"

One of the most important things you learn from jamming is listening. Everything is improvised—it's made up right there—but you can feel the connection. You don't feel that it's ten people playing by themselves in their own ways, you feel one band going at the same time. What the other people are playing becomes more important to you—to inspire you—

than what you play yourself. You're going to have a point in your solo where you can play all you want, but mainly

the rest is listening.

RT: Tell me a little about your musical background.

HH: My house was very musical. My grandfather was listening to traditional Cuban music all day. My father was the biggest jazz freak in Cuba. He knew everybody. And my brother was listening to the Beatles. We had a bunch of instruments at the house, but I was always crazy with the drums. I remember teachers throwing me out of school because I was playing with pencils. I played at home for four or five years, and then when I was fourteen I went to a music school. We had the formal education at this school—literature and math—but I spent the whole day in drum classes. So at the end of the year I was gone. But this teacher, Santiago Reiter, was the best thing that could have happened to me. He was very creative. He had only one book, the Jim Chapin book, and at that time he already thought of how to apply that book in many ways to many different styles. He had me practice it with the left hand on the cymbal instead of the right. He was the person who gave me the desire to do something different with the drums.

RT: When you started learning, were you a right-hand-lead player?

HH: Yeah, I am right-hand-

CUBAN JAMMING

Here are a few albums Horacio has recorded that he feels best represent his playing.

Artist	Album Title	Label
Michel Camilo	Through My Eyes	TropiJazz RMD 82067
Gonzalo Rubalcaba	Giraldilla	Messidor 15801
Gonzalo Rubalcaba	Live In Havana	Messidor 15830
Victor Mendoza	This Is Why	Ram Records 4515-2
Ed Simon	Beauty Within	Audioquest AQCD 1025
Paquito D'Rivera	40 Years Of Cuban Jam Sessions	Messidor 15826
Paquito D'Rivera	Cuba Jazz	TropiJazz RMD 82016
TropiJazz All Stars	TropiJazz All Stars	TropiJazz RMD 82028

And here are the albums that he listens to for inspiration.

Artist	Album Title	Drummer	Label
Mahavishnu Orchestra	Visions Of The Emerald Beyond	Narada Michael Walden	Columbia 33411
VSOP	VSOP	Tony Williams	Columbia 34688
Chick Corea	Friends	Steve Gadd	Polydor PD-1-6160
Chick Corea	Light As A Feather	Airto	Polydor PD 5525
Pat Metheny	80/81	Jack DeJohnette	ECM 78118-21180
Weather Report	Night Passage	Peter Erskine	JC 36793
Irakere	The Best Of Irakere	various	Columbia/Legacy CK-57719



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Austria, Johann Wieser, Scharnitz	43 (0)5213 515934	43 (0)5213 52786	Israel, Halilit, Tel Aviv	972 (0)3 6822917	972 (0)3 6813285
Belgium/Luxemburg, EMD, Brussels	32 (0)2 2400270	32 (0)2 2400299	Italy, Aramini, Bologna	39 (0)51 766077	39 (0)51 766109
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Canary Is, Musical Orotava, Tenerife	34 (0)22 323233	34 (0)22 320766	Netherlands, EMD, Dordrecht	31 (0)78 6131331	31 (0)78 6148788
Caribbean Is, MBT Int'l, Charleston SC USA	1 803 7639083	1 803 7639096	N Zealand, Jade Sound Systems, Auckland	64 (0)9 6387530	64 (0)9 6234304
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Denmark, Englund Musik, Copenhagen	45 31 554812	45 31 552649	Portugal, Diapasao, Lisbon	351 (0)1 8405203	351 (0)1 8402020
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ed, but this teacher was into total freedom on the drumset. So there was a point where I did everything left-handed. I used a ride cymbal on my left at the beginning with Gonzalo, and I was playing a lot of stuff left-handed. I don't know if that's the right way to call it—you know, people just call it left-handed because the left hand is playing the ride cymbal instead of the right. So that concept of left- or right-handed, I don't know if it's really a lead role of any hand.

RT: You're trying to blur that idea.

HH: Right. *Anything* can be the lead part. It can be the bass drum or the left foot or your left hand or your right hand. A lot of people just look at the hand that is playing the cymbal, but the main role may be in what they are playing in the other hand. It's more about thinking of sounds. I have certain sounds that I can reach with my left foot and certain sounds that I can reach with my right hand. So I see it more as which sounds can lead a particular rhythm.

RT: How do you build a pattern? Do you think of a sound or a certain instrument first?

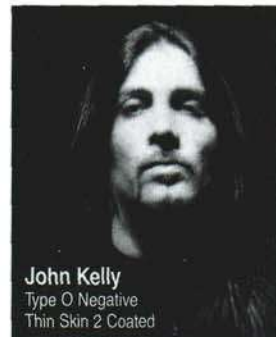
HH: To me a pattern is a melodic cycle more than a rhythmic pattern. The rhythm is important, and you can probably play the same thing on only one sound source, but I take that rhythm and try to find a melody that makes it more than a pattern. I'll take it and create a melody that will end up being the foundation for somebody else who will be creating a melody on top of that.

RT: You spread it out over the kit to make the melody?

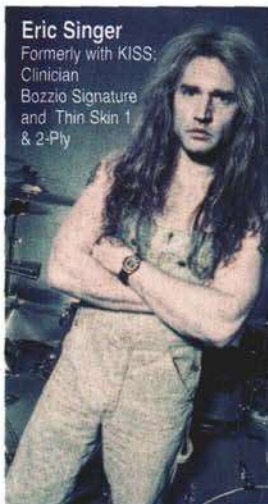
HH: Yes, and you get a lot of help from what the other musicians are playing, like the bass line. You've got to play the tune first to hear what the others are playing, and then you can create a pattern or a rhythmic foundation to work with all of that. That applies to every kind of music. On a rock tune we have the snare on 2 and 4, but the bass drum is going to work only after you hear the bass line.

RT: How does that concept apply now with Santana, where you're working on popular older material?

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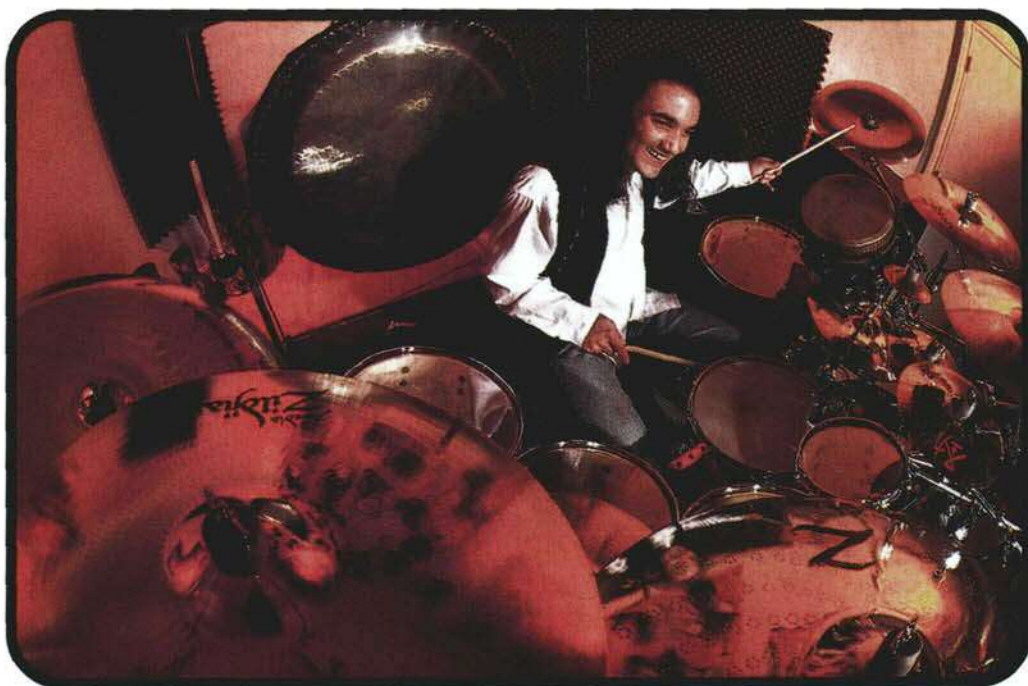
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HH: I have a great opportunity now to go to my roots. I'm playing some tunes the way they were played before, others a new way. We're playing a lot of new material,

creating drum parts for that. I'm not a rock drummer, I'm not a jazz drummer, I'm not an Afro-Cuban drummer—but I play rock, jazz, and Afro-Cuban rhythm. I think if I





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have to classify myself, I would say that I'm more like a "world beat" drummer.

RT: Did you start putting those different styles together in your mind from an early age?

HH: Early on I thought that my grandfather's music was old and that my father's music was crazy. My brother was into the Beatles and Led Zeppelin, which every thirteen-year-old was into. There was no way to get records in Cuba, but fortunately we were only ninety miles from Florida, so we had the radio on every day. I didn't understand a word of what anybody was saying on the radio because I didn't speak English at the time, so it was pure music that I was listening to.

From the radio I tried to imitate Ringo Starr, John Bonham, and Bill Bruford. Later on it was Emerson, Lake & Palmer, Mahavishnu Orchestra, and Chick Corea's Return To Forever, and at that point I was getting closer to my father's music, jazz. I listened to everybody, every drummer: Tony Williams, Jack DeJohnette, Billy Cobham, Lenny White, Narada Michael Walden. Eventually I heard Steve Gadd, then Dave Weckl, Vinnie Colaiuta, Dennis Chambers, Marvin "Smitty" Smith, and Robbie Ameen. It's an endless list. I also listened to *all* of the drummers that were with Santana, like Michael Shrieve, Graham Lear, and Walfredo Reyes Jr. And through jazz, with artists like Dizzy Gillespie, I discovered Afro-Cuban music, which is kind of funny because I had traditional Afro-Cuban music right there.

RT: How did your playing career get started?

HH: I started playing with a saxophone player, Nicolas Reynoso, who Gonzalo Rubalcaba was playing piano for, and that's how Gonzalo and I met. Then I started working in the studios. I did over three hundred records for Cuban artists. There were two studios, one on top of the other, and I used to have a mattress there. I would go to one session, sleep for two hours, and then go to another session. I didn't have time to go home, and that happened for a week sometimes. Just recording and recording. I loved that job. My idol at that time was Steve Gadd, so I'd look at myself in the mirror and think I was the Cuban Steve Gadd!

All of that studio experience gave me a

chance to listen to myself, to hear what I was doing. I never recorded myself when I practiced, so I never had the chance to listen and say, "Okay, this worked and this didn't work."

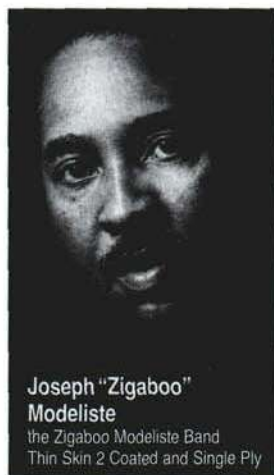
RT: You must have been exposed to all kinds of music, too.

HH: There was all kinds of music—Cuban, ballads, rock—which in Cuba was called "nueva trova"—and a new folk movement. I loved to play every kind of music. I believe that there are two kinds of music, good and bad. The style doesn't matter. So working in the studio with Nicolas was a great chance to learn.

Then one day Gonzalo Rubalcaba asked me if I wanted to join a band he was putting together. It was a great band, and it offered a lot of freedom musically. We didn't play anything that was played before, so I didn't have to play like anybody else. It was, "Let's sit and play," and everybody was playing something different and happy to be listening to something new.

RT: How many players were in that group?

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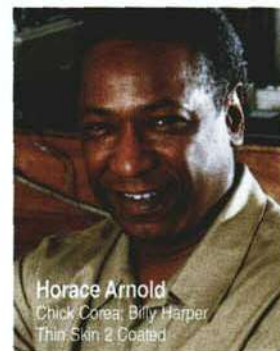
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HH: Seven, with a guy named Roberto Vizcaino playing a percussion set with congas, timbales, bongos, and everything at the same time. Roberto is a multi-instrumentalist. He's a great conga player and a great timbale player. And he graduated from classical percussion school, so he can play vibes, marimba, and timpani. He has *stupid* coordination: He can play the congas with one hand and solo with the other hand on timbales. It's unbelievable. It was a joy to work with him, and we locked in on the first day.

Sometimes Gonzalo would come in and say, "Okay, I have this tune that is a 6/8 thing, and the bass line is like this...." Roberto would start playing a pattern on top of that, and then I would start doing a pattern that complemented his part and at the same time got the bass line's spirit in there too. Or I would be playing a pattern and he would come in on top of that. We found a way to create patterns that worked together. People used to call us "the industry." They said that it was the sound of an industry going.

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for me, limiting me to sounding one way. I already had five cowbells in my drumset, but that wasn't enough. Roberto was responsible for making me look at traditional percussion instruments in a different way and seeing the big picture in that field. I thank God because I had the chance to play with the best percussionists in the world. It led me to a more massive concept of drumming.

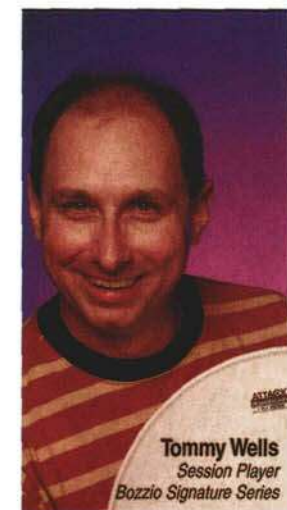
RT: And working with percussionists involves listening.

HH: In the old school the drummer was the guy who carried the time. But *everybody* has to carry the time. If there's not a drummer there, the band still has to sound in time. Music requires the drummer for colors and to make music, not just to keep the time. Percussion players have freedom that we drumset players don't have sometimes, because we are supposed to keep the time. They have a more open rhythmic spectrum, but they're keeping time all the same, even if they are doing colors and effects, or soloing. They know where I is.

The drums gave me the chance to have these people around me and to work with them. I studied percussion and rhythms, but I don't consider myself a percussion player, a conga player, a bongo player, or a timbale player. I respect the people who do that the way it should be done—the way Giovanni Hidalgo does it, the way Changuito does it, the way Orestes Vilato and Tito Puente do it. They have dedicated their lives to it. You cannot be a boxer and a volleyball player at the same time.

RT: Did you get into your left-foot clave independence when you were with Gonzalo?

HH: The first person that I heard play something like that was Candido, the legendary percussionist with Dizzy and Chico O'Farrill in the '50s. At one point he was playing a conga and a hi-hat, and a cowbell with his foot. And then Walfredo Reyes, Sr. got into that after Candido. In my case, that comes straight from this teacher, Santiago Reiter. He was very upset, because many drummers at that time didn't even play the hi-hat. They were playing only with their hands. Reiter, from the very first day I studied with him, was, "You have to move the left foot. So let's play it in quarter notes, then let's play it in half notes, now let's play it on the offbeats, now on the downbeats." He taught me that



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there were other things you could do with the left foot.

I started playing the clave thing when I was with Gonzalo, about twelve or thirteen years ago. At that time it was more like creating a pattern on the drums and incorporating the clave. Eventually I started thinking that I had the chance to become free with my other three limbs while I was keeping the clave. The Afro-Cuban language is so rich rhythmically, because it's like three and four rhythms going at the same time. You can play triplet feels and 16th feels, and the clave fits with both cases.

I started playing with the clave and trying to solo on top of it, and then I created my own exercises to develop independence. All the Afro-Cuban books out there have patterns. So people learn a pattern, but they don't know what to do with that pattern because they don't have that coordination to feel free inside a pattern to move away and come back.

I remember when I was trying to learn how to play jazz; the first thing I got was a coordination book, the Jim Chapin book. If

you have the coordination, you can play any pattern right away. You don't have to sit there with a book and say, Well, this hand goes like this, now this one.

RT: How can somebody begin to learn left-foot clave?

HH: People are looking at this only in a rhythmic way, but you're talking about music, not only about drumming. The clave is a pattern, but besides a pattern it's the main melody in Afro-Cuban music. Miles Davis said there's always a melody inside the melody, and that's what clave is. Clave is the main melody from where you go with all the melodies. I think that learning to play left-foot clave within the rhythm is more of a melodic than a rhythmic process. You're creating another melody with your foot and trying to connect all the melodies to it. I don't think of it as a separate thing.

RT: On Michel Camilo's "Mambo Inn" [from *Through My Eyes*] you play a pattern on cowbell with your hands and then answer it on cowbell with your feet.

HH: Yeah, it's another sound possibility. I like the cowbell. Actually, the original

A photograph of Mike Palmer, a man with short dark hair, wearing a black and white striped t-shirt and dark pants. He is standing with his arms crossed next to a large, ornate, red-painted wooden drum set. The drum set is highly decorative, with intricate carvings and a glass-enclosed section revealing the internal components. The drums are white with black and red graphics, and the word "MAPEX" is visible on the bass drums. The setting appears to be a stage or a performance venue, with a dark background and some stage lights visible in the upper part of the image.

Mike Palmer

Garth Brooks
Stillwater Band

Photography by Henry Diltz

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clave is a wood sound. Personally I prefer the cowbell sound, because I play other things too.

RT: Do you use a hard or soft beater on the cowbell?

HH: A soft beater. It's a little bit of a sweeter sound. The hard beater is too metallic. I play it in different places, not just for clave, like for quarter notes, and the wood sound on something like that sounds too much like a click track or some pre-recorded thing. A cowbell sounds more natural and more earthy.

I remember learning to play 8th notes on the hi-hat by listening to Tony Williams. So now I have my cowbell there and my hi-hat. I go back and forth between the cowbell and the hi-hat in a pattern. I'm using different sound sources, but using the same technique that I learned from Tony.

RT: Did you continue to hone these concepts after you left Cuba and Gonzalo's band and were living in Italy?

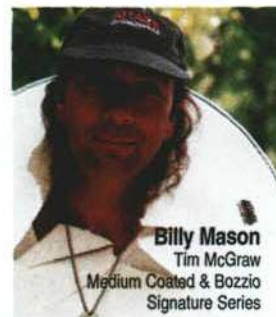
HH: I learned a lot in Rome, because that was the first time in my life that I taught drums. I had to find an explanation for everything. Stuff that I just did I now had to think about. I did that for two years, six hours a day. I really had the perfect conditions for practicing, and I was totally into drumming. I rented an apartment two blocks from the school, so I was sleeping till 12:00, teaching from 2:00 till 8:00, practicing or playing somewhere until 1:00 in the morning, and then going out to dinner.

When I did get to New York, in order to survive I played for \$50 a night. I was playing every night until I got my papers, about a year and a half ago. I had the chance to do some good records, like with Ed Simon and Anthony Jackson, but not too much because I was not able to travel. As soon as I got my papers I started working with Michel Camilo.

RT: You seem real comfortable in that trio setting, both with Ed Simon and Michel Camilo.

HH: I think I like my work with Michel more than with Ed. I'm sorry that I didn't play more mature with him. I don't know if "mature" is the word. I mean, in Cuba we try to play like Americans. And the Americans try to play like Cubans. So in Cuba there are a lot of people that know Steve Gadd better than people here do. And there are people here who know

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Changuito better than the Cubans.

RT: You think that affected how you played with Ed Simon?

HH: Yeah. It was a part of finding myself. With Michel I was trying to find a more particular sound. Sound-wise, when I got Michel's gig, I didn't want to play drumset. With him I was using the bass drum, bongos, timbales, two floor toms, snare, cowbells, and cymbals. It was like drums, but instead of the rack toms I had bongos and timbales. And that was mainly just to get away from the style of drumming that he was used to.

Michel likes a certain kind of playing, like the way Dave Weckl plays. At that time in my life I was not interested in doing that. So I told him that I really appreciated the gig, but that I wanted to do it my way. We got together and played, and we were totally in love with it. I feel more confident that I can find a way to be myself. I listen to everybody every day, but I'm gonna do it my way. Young jazz drummers are influenced by Dave Weckl, but we have to prove ourselves in the music that we're making. We cannot try to play like somebody played fifty years ago or try

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to sound like him. Some people think that there's nothing else to say, but to me there's a lot to say. Just live your time. Listen to everybody and put all of that into where you are today.

RT: Those are some great arrangements on Michel's record. How much rehearsing did you guys do?

HH: Two rehearsals, three hours each day. The musicians that you have around you are so important. The people you work with are a big part of your playing. It's like, with Michel and John Patitucci or Anthony Jackson, you don't have to play. What they play is going to tell you what you have to do. You don't even have to think about it, you just have to hear what those people are playing, and that's all. It was the first time that I was with John, and it was a blessing. He's a great musician and a great guy. We're going to do a video with bass and drums. I'm thrilled.

RT: "Night In Tunisia" [also from Camilo's *Through My Eyes*] is a wide-open track, and you can tell a lot of listening is going on when you and Michel spar at the end.

HH: We did that one in one take, but it was so funny. Michel said, "Okay, let's rehearse this 'Night In Tunisia,' and the engineer recorded it. Then the engineer said, "Yo, that was killing." It's beautiful because it was fresh, like, "Who knows what's going to happen? Let's just go."

RT: Do you have a regular practice routine?

HH: "Practice" is the wrong word. I love to improvise, so I sit at my drums, start playing, and then I realize that it is six hours later. That's the way ideas come for me. I don't record my practice and listen to it. I remember probably two percent of all that I play in one day, but those things become tools, and then you give them some kind of order.

RT: If you find something that you like, you'll work on it for a while and then move on.

HH: Yeah. It happens a lot that when you move on and play something else for half an hour, you don't remember the original idea anymore. But then a day later, the thing comes back to you. That's mainly the way I work. It's like giving the brain a chance to think of the random takes, things that I definitely played before but that I don't have numbered or classified. They

are in some way in my brain.

RT: Do you have set things you play at clinics?

HH: At clinics you have to give an explanation of what you're playing, and for me the teaching experience was very important. In a clinic you have no time to *find* an explanation for it; you have to have that explanation ready.

At clinics I work more with Afro-Cuban music and the relationships of the binary and trinary subdivisions of the music. Afro-Cuban music has both of these subdivisions in a bar at the same time—triplet and 8th-note subdivisions. In rock or other kinds of music with more steady rhythmic patterns, you are either in two or three. It's more important to make people first understand that than to try and teach them patterns, because that's the foundation of the whole style—that you are in both times at the same time. Nobody can play that style well until they feel that inside. So I'll play a solo in 4/4, and then in 6/8, and then I play a solo where it's 4/4 and 6/8, to try to make people understand.

RT: Kind of like Elvin Jones' triplet feel in jazz?

HH: Right. I think that comes totally from African drumming. The bata rhythms have a lot of those concepts. So it's a very good point of reference to listen to bata and Afro-Cuban folkloric music. The bata that I am influenced by was created in Cuba by the Africans who were brought to Cuba as slaves. And they play some incredible rhythms with that, intricate rhythms that are based on two and three at the same time.

RT: You have a great feeling for odd time playing, like on that early Gonzalo Rubalcaba stuff, and the Ed Simon release.

HH: Yeah, Gonzalo used to play them every night, and Ed is a great composer. A lot of his music that is in odd times feels like it's in four. Music is not about people playing odd times just for the fact of playing an odd-time thing. Music is about making it flow, like Vinnie Colaiuta does with Sting when they play in five and seven.

RT: The TropiJazz All Stars is quite a lineup.

HH: Talk about a percussion section! That band was a blessing. We had Tito Puente, Giovanni Hidalgo, Richie Flores, Johnny Almendra, and me. And again, when you're playing drums and it's this Latin-

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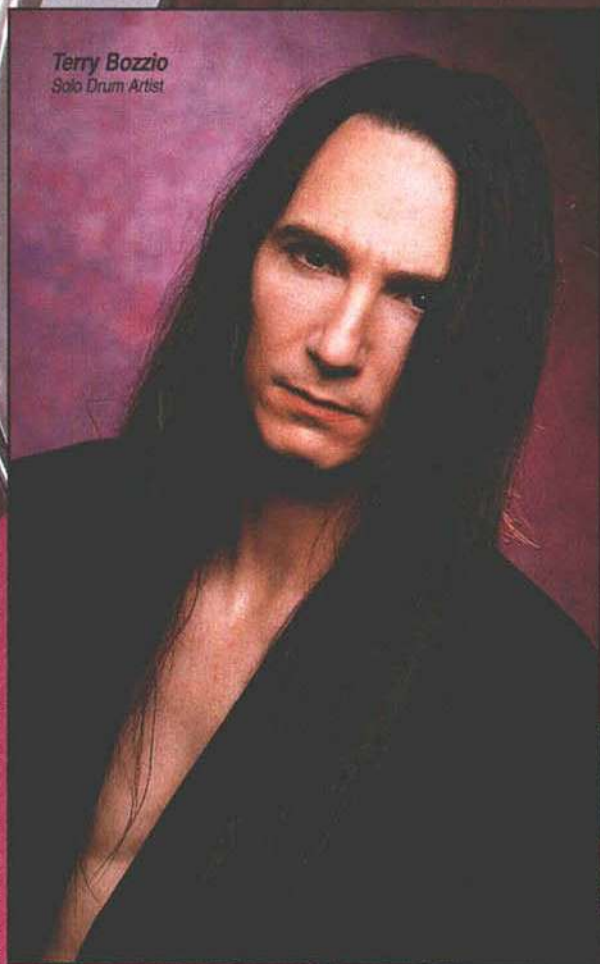
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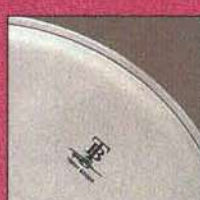
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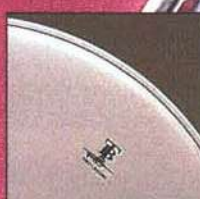
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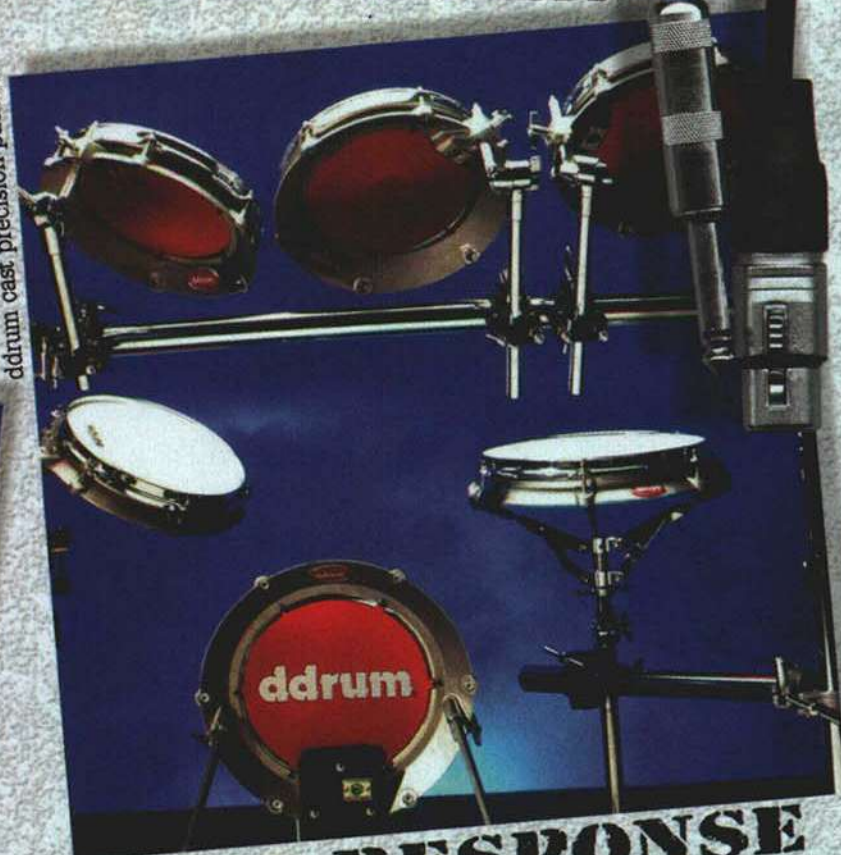
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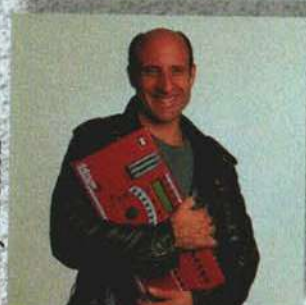
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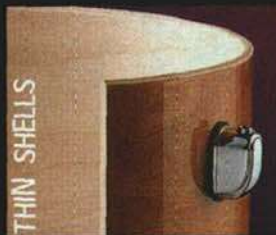
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Jeff Hamilton

by Burt Korall

photos by Alex Solca

It's a love affair - no doubt about it. Jeff Hamilton, the gifted jazz percussionist, has been passionately involved with drums since he was eight years old. "I got the bug early. And once bitten, I didn't seem to have any choice," Jeff asserts, adding, "You find your time is pretty well taken up with studying, practicing, playing, listening to, and talking about music and percussion.

"Some drummers give up social and family commitments - everything and think of nothing other than drums. I couldn't do that and have the sort of life that I want. But the instrument certainly fills most of my days and nights."

Jeff shares this intense music/drums focus with most

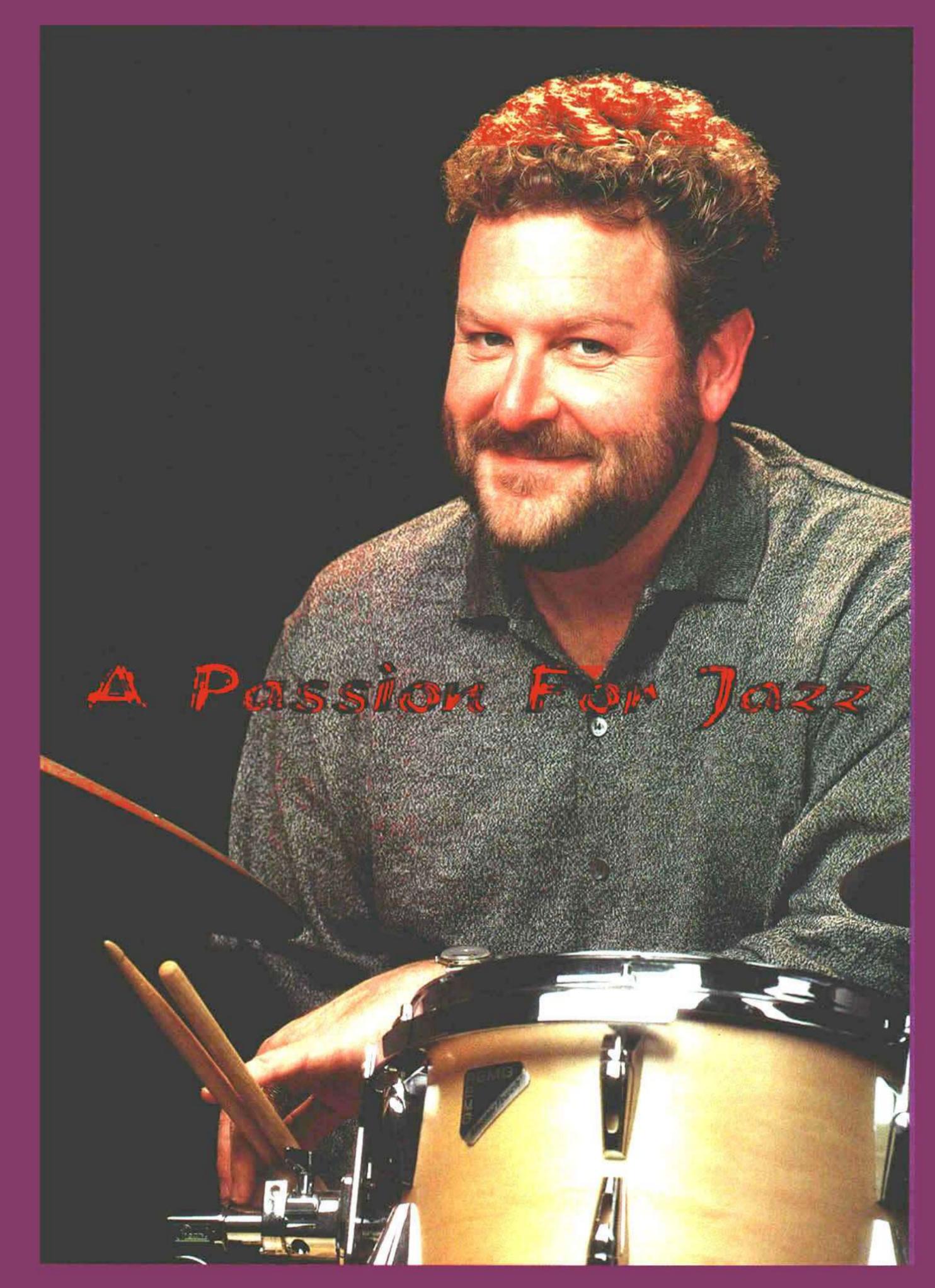
important drummers. Consistently high-level, creative performances are not possible without extraordinary dedication. Only a prodigy, a super-talent like Buddy Rich, for example, can do what has to be done without the day-to-day concentration on study, practice, and performance.

Max Roach, the much admired innovator, has always had the built-in drive to accomplish - an excellent work ethic. He often has spoken of his need to play, to learn, to grow, to fully realize his possibilities as an artist. That he seeks challenge and change certainly is indicative of this.

Tony Williams was a prototypical striver. Music and drums meant everything to him. He was in the

midst of a memorable journey, contributing as few could, when God took him from us. Like all the great ones, he was particularly concerned about not cheating himself or his audiences on any level.

There are so many others who have given themselves to the instrument and acknowledge the multiple demands of music. Kenny Clarke, Roy, Haynes, Shelly Manne, Steve Gadd, Don Lamond - key players going back to Vic Berton and Gene Krupa and including contemporary "killers" like Dennis Chambers and Lewis Nash - have made it clear that playing drums is not just a vocation, but more like a continuing quest to discover and offer the best in themselves.

A man with curly brown hair and a beard is shown from the chest up, wearing a grey button-down shirt. He is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. He is holding two wooden drumsticks in his right hand, positioned over a light-colored snare drum. The background is dark and out of focus. The title "A Passion For Jazz" is written in a stylized, red, serif font across the middle of the image.

A Passion For Jazz

Jeff Hamilton has that passion. He wasn't deterred by those who talked about the insecurity and lack of stability in music, particularly jazz. He had a plan, regarding how he would conduct his life. Part of a working class family, in which the good things in life were always *earned*, Jeff worked hard, progressively becoming the personification of the boy scout motto—"Be Prepared." The many possibilities for the future kept him highly motivated.

From the outset, Hamilton realized he had to learn everything about music: the drums (of course), mallet instruments, timpani, how to write.

He also sensed that becoming acquainted with the music business and how it works would help as well. Unfortunately, many musicians through the years have ignored this necessity until being burned by less than honest business people.

"I first studied with John

"You can't reach deep into your emotions if you're playing too loud. So you have to start from ground zero and see what you can add to the silence. And sometimes silence is better than anything you have to say."

McMahan, a local drummer in my hometown of Richmond, Indiana," Jeff says. "John was a disciplinarian and wouldn't let me get away with anything. I had started on the piano at five and recognized note values early. So I sightread my lessons and didn't practice as much as I should have. To counteract this very temporary, kid-like 'attitude,' he threw really tough material at me; I had to work very hard to survive with him—and to excel, which rapidly became a need!

"I wouldn't be as focused if it weren't for John. He helped me develop my hands and put me in touch with what was really important. I'll tell you something: John, and all my teachers who have helped and influenced me, are up there on the stand with me every night.

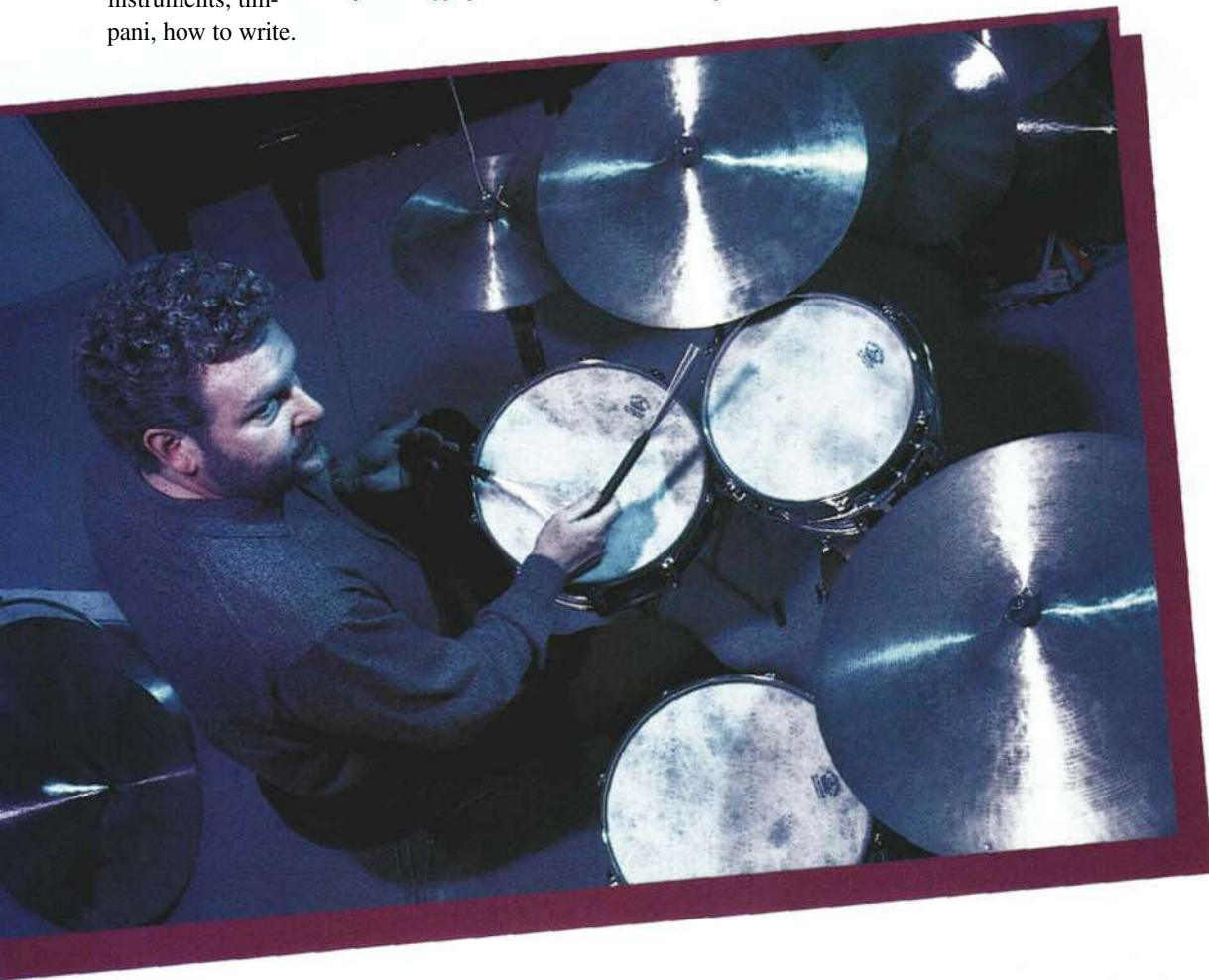
"I have great parents," Jeff adds, with special emphasis. "I was raised in a very conservative church community, mostly farmers and those who work in factories—the sort of people who want a straight-ahead life for themselves and their children. Bringing up kids carefully was their chief concern. They wanted their children to avoid 'difficulties' of all kinds. I was told repeatedly that going in the direction that has brought down so many jazz players was the worst thing I could do.

"My folks were terrific...but they weren't easy!"

Unlike some youngsters today, Jeff didn't get a drumset as soon as he could execute a few strokes. He learned for a few years on a rented snare

drum that his parents ultimately bought. At thirteen, he finally received his first kit, purchased by his mother and dad from savings. It could very well have been viewed as a reward for hard work and excellence—Jeff had won several local drum competitions—or as an acknowledgment of their son's ambition and his grasp of what was necessary to get where he wanted to go.

The joy this Hoosier felt when he first saw his red sparkle set had no parallels in his young life. Typically, he



took it upon himself to work even harder practicing on the drums whenever possible and playing trio gigs on Friday and Saturday nights at Elizabeth Parker's Restaurant in Richmond, with pianists Leo Ryan and Carol Woodward. He was too young to work in clubs or bars.

Jeff developed a very musical playing approach and concept as the years passed. But at the outset, like many others, he gave in to the temptation of technique for its own sake, often displaying his growing resources when economy would have served him better. He was fascinated by speed and those who could really execute. Master technicians Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich, and Louie Bellson were primary influences during his early years as a drummer.

Jeff didn't veer from his plan. He studied timpani and mallet instruments in Indianapolis with Dr. Erwin Mueller, head of the Ball State Percussion Department, then followed that up with two years at Indiana University. The percussion class during his freshman year on the Bloomington campus was intimidating, to say the least.

Peter Erskine, who moved along rapidly even then, and is now one of the world's most influential contemporary drummers, was one of the many talented students in that class.

Hamilton's world expanded in a major way at Indiana. He associated with thoughtful, well-equipped, young musicians—and great teachers, like David Baker and timpanist George Gaber. "The band I was on there played Thad Jones charts—music that opened up my head and ears," Jeff says. "The only way these compositions and arrangements really worked was the way Mel Lewis played them. Even back then, I was getting lessons from Mel, who became my most important mentor.

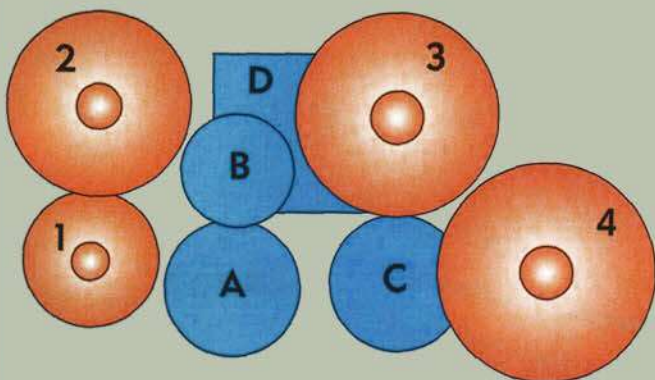
"I met bassist John Clayton at Indiana," Jeff adds. "A very advanced musician, he seemed to know all the right moves. John became one of my clos-

est friends, a direction-giver and key factor in my career. When he first heard me, he wasn't shy about

telling me what had to be taken care of before my playing could become mean-



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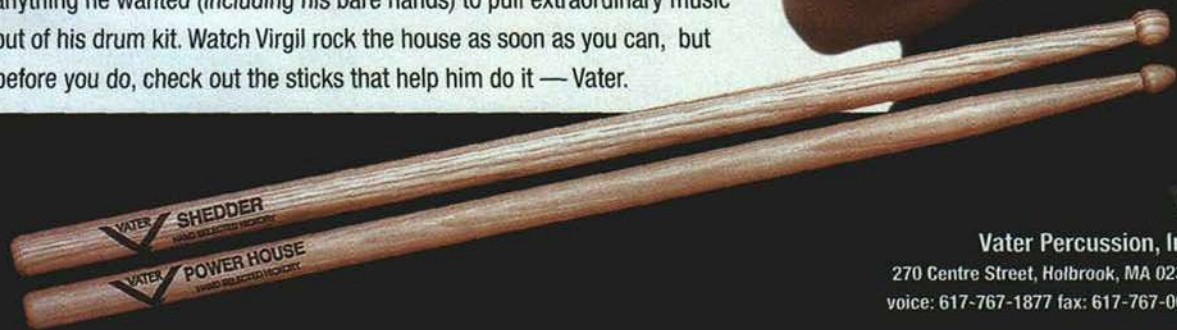
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ingful and personal. The first thing John suggested was that I get my time together by listening to great time players, like Philly Joe Jones and Shelly Manne.

"Always an analytic person, I studied all facets of the performances of Philly, Shelly, and all the important drummers," Jeff remembers. "I listened constantly and transcribed what they did. I wanted to



understand their reactions in a variety of situations—and apply them in my own way. Two things became pretty clear to me: The deeper you get into everything, the better you will become. And—this is *really* important—you have to trust your instincts and allow them to guide you."

Jeff left Indiana to continue his education with drummer John Von Ohlen in Indianapolis. Von Ohlen is a story unto himself. He played well in the Woody Herman band in the late 1960s and enhanced the performances of the Stan Kenton band (1970-72), bringing a much-needed time, swing, and informed color consciousness to that ensemble and its rhythm section.

Von Ohlen certainly had his own view of how to play the instrument and make it effective in those bands. The Kenton ensemble hadn't had the benefit of uplift, rhythmic security, and "style" of this kind since Stan Levey and Mel Lewis (the latter a strong influence on Von Ohlen) were employed by the tall, dynamic bandleader.

"John is a wonderful player and an extraordinary teacher," Jeff declares. "He showed me what had to be done in a big band. He insisted I think and phrase more like a horn player, and that I establish a kinship with, and an understanding of, the lead trumpet player. He talked about self-editing and knowing how charts are built and where the climaxes were. And he was emphatic about the time thing.

"While I was studying with Von Ohlen, John Clayton recommended me to Murray McEachern, a trombonist who had played with many of the great bands. McEachern had been appointed by the Tommy Dorsey estate to front a new Dorsey band. I went to Kansas City to audition—my first time away from home—and got the gig. That was in 1974. I was twenty-one.

"Most people aren't too smart when they're very young," Jeff explains. "I turned away from the Dorsey opportunity—at first. When I went for my lesson with Von Ohlen, he asked what was going on. I told him about the Dorsey offer and said something dumb about waiting for an invitation from Basie or Woody, or some-

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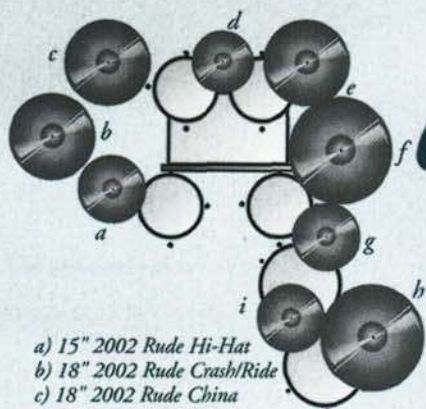
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thing like that. I wasn't sure I wanted to play a lot of Elks Clubs and Moose Lodges with the Dorsey band.

"He got right to it! 'Go out and learn how to treat a band before you think about getting other jobs! What other bands have you been on—the Indiana Jazz Ensemble?' Of course he was right. You have to go out on the road and get your butt kicked.

"John provided insight on so many things. He talked about being satisfied and happy. He kept saying, 'You don't have to play with everybody to be happy. Find your own niche.' John has done just that. He has a farm and a steady gig, and he teaches at the conservatory in Cincinnati. That's what *he* needs to feel good.

"Hey, I loved the music and being on the Dorsey band; I grew up with that kind of music," Jeff points out. "I spent nine valuable months with Murray and the guys, then was hired off the Dorsey band by Lionel Hampton early in 1975.

"Trombonist Dennis Wilson, who had subbed with the Dorsey band, was working with Hamp. He pushed for me and I got the job. But it was short-lived; the band went into a Broadway show starring Bette Midler, and didn't need the rhythm section. There I was, out of work. I went home. But I was lucky. Another opportunity with the Dorsey band presented itself almost immediately. I took it and stayed on the band for a month.

"John Clayton called in June of 1975 from Los Angeles and said pianist Monty Alexander wanted me. I jumped at the

opportunity to work again with John—and with Monty, who has a very special talent.

"Of course I had played with other trios and small bands. But I felt there were a lot of things I had to learn in order to be an all-around contributor. Playing solos and responding to what Monty was laying down were key to making it in the trio. He's a strong, swinging pianist with a background in various types of music. You've got to really do it! Fortunately it turned out great. There was a lot of joy involved."

Monty Alexander agrees: "It was one of my best musical experiences ever. I threw the ball and Jeff and John ran with it, regardless of the type of music I played. Jeff was particularly good with the things out of my Caribbean heritage. And the same guy who came on so strong in a big band whispered and swung lightly with the trio, while giving us the strength we needed. Jeff added so much to the situation. He played such great brushes.

"You ought to listen to *Montreux Alexander*, one of the CDs we made. It'll give you an idea how well everything worked. We walked together as one, attached at the hip. Jeff kicked ass and does every time we get together to play. And the reunions are frequent because we love to work together," Monty adds. "And it's not just the drumming, man; it's the person. There's a closeness with Jeff...and John—friendship is involved. It's there in the music and enhances what we do. Like Oscar Peterson, I appreciate nice people. I

know Jeff's mom and dad; they're wonderful. And he's an all-around good guy."

Nineteen seventy-seven was the year Jeff went with Woody Herman for six months. It was a learning experience. "The band was kind of down. Everyone was looking at their shoes. It was right after Woody's auto accident," Jeff recalls. "Woody tested

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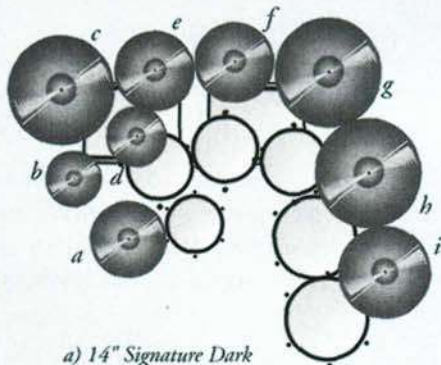
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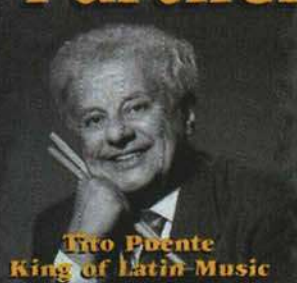
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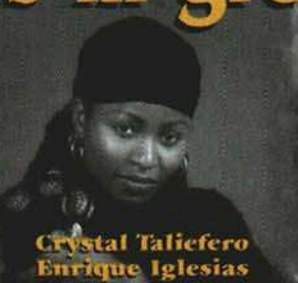
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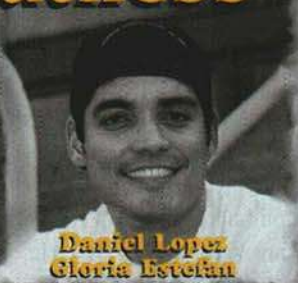
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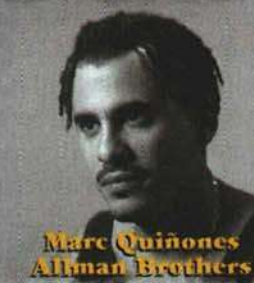
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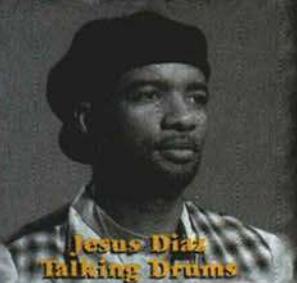
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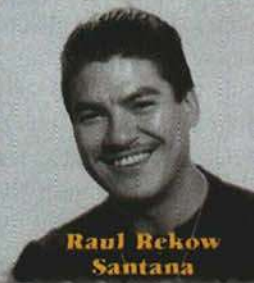
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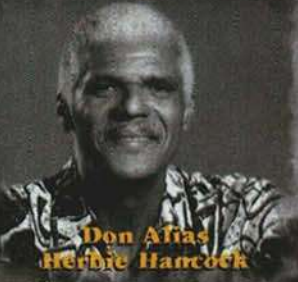
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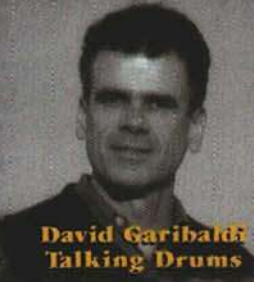
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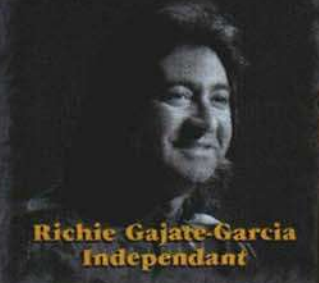
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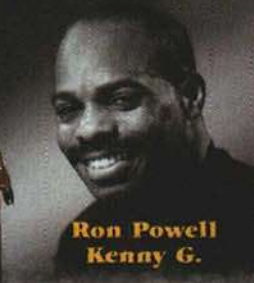
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me on the first night, laying out an opening set that would try any drummer and get him a little angry. But, fortunately, I passed his test."

From then on, it went quite well. Woody was the type of leader who allowed his players to develop. He wasn't a dictator, a control freak who had to let his employees know who was the boss. Unfortunately, it wasn't one of Woody's best bands. But the experience allowed Jeff to deal with music of various kinds.

The records the drummer made with the band essentially speak well for him. But there were downs for Jeff as a player during the Herman stay. This was an important, transitional phase before he fully defined his concept as a musician and established who and what he was.

Listening to Jeff on the 1978 album *Road Father* (Century) is an uneven experience. His treatment of the famous Herman blues piece, "I've Got News For You," is a disappointment. The band sounds indifferent, a bit out of tune. The intention and meaning of the music are seemingly lost on this edition of the Herd. Woody, in addition, sings like a caricature of himself. Jeff—his drums, loosely tuned—sounds somewhat flat.

Admittedly Jeff was competing with a great performance. Woody initially recorded "I've Got News For You" in 1947 with one of his most extraordinary bands, the Second Herd. Don Lamond performed as only he could at that time—in an innovative, terribly exciting manner, playing stun-

ning breaks and lead-ins that set a precedent in modern bands.

Other recordings Jeff made with Woody Herman testify to his ability and capacity to adapt to circumstances. On *Chick, Donald, Walter & Woodrow*, also on Century, the band sounds better. So does Jeff. His legit technique is particularly well utilized on the opening of Chick Corea's "Suite For Hot Band." Then he progressively establishes his own groove on the jazz-oriented and Latin (merengue/samba) segments.

Jeff is equally adept on the Steely Dan tunes in the set, responding very naturally to their pop syncopations while bringing a bright thrust to the music. His work behind tenorist Flip Phillips and the Herman band, *Together: Flip And Woody* (Century), made at about the same time, is also satisfying.

In 1983 Jeff returned to Herman to record *My Buddy* on Concord with

Rosemary Clooney. Again he does some very good work. On the opening entry, Marilyn and Alan Bergman's "I Believe In Love," Jeff sets the pace for the entire album. His solo on the cut is both a comment on the recording's musical climate and his own versatility. Jeff fits; he makes this pop-oriented project work on its own terms... and work for him as well.

While he was with the Herman band, Jeff met Ray Brown, the influential bassist and music business presence. This encounter changed his life, making possible consistent employment for over two decades. Brown had heard Jeff at the Lighthouse in Hermosa Beach, outside LA, on a gig with Monty Alexander and vibraharpist Milt Jackson. He was attracted by the feel and quality of Jeff's playing. A bit later they got together to talk, and Brown suggested Jeff come to Los Angeles to live and work.

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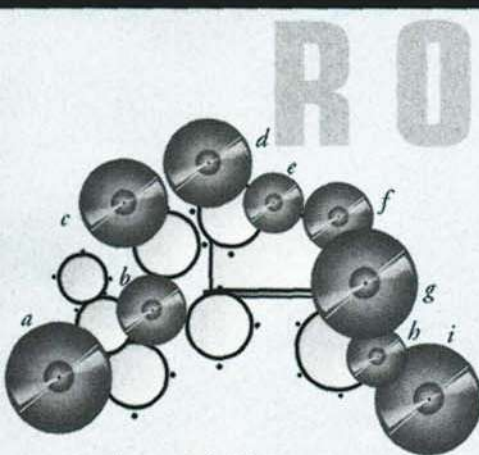
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this meeting. He left the Herman band and took up residence in LA. It was perfect, considering his weather and sports preferences. Jeff's a five-day-a-week tennis player—something of a sports freak. The sunny climate certainly supports these interests. Most important, though, the work prospects were excellent.

Brown asked Jeff to join the LA 4, which featured Bud Shank on reeds, Laurindo Almeida on guitar, Brown on bass, and Jeff's friend-idol-teacher Shelly Manne on drums. Jeff's intention was to make the group less chamber-like and more a vehicle for straight-ahead swing, which he did.

The move to LA and the advice of Shelly and Ray Brown made him think about direction. They kept telling him that playing in the studios was the only way a musician in LA or New York—or any major music center for that matter—could stay in one place.

"One day I went to watch Shelly at one of the sessions for *Love Boat*—the TV series," Jeff recalls. "Shelly had a set including about six tom-toms, with the bot-tom heads off. It was nothing like the kit he

ordinarily used. I thought to myself: 'Man, it's great that he can do this sort of thing—have the mindset and the versatility to be able to handle it.' But that's also when I realized that I didn't want to be a studio player. I decided I had to be me and have control of my destiny—not be asked to be somebody else five days a week. So I continued to concentrate on jazz—kept my nose to the grindstone, practicing and playing and assimilating as much as I could, hoping to get good enough to be able to keep up with and help the master players."

His choice made, Jeff was determined not to back away from it. And he hasn't. He's been lucky to be able to do what he wants—be fulfilled and financially secure, both of which tend to elude many who go their own way. Jeff has worked with all the people he admired early on. The reason? He provides the sensitivity, strength, and satisfaction they need and enjoy.

Aside from briefly working with the Basie band in the 1980s after Dennis Mackrel left, much of Hamilton's musical life over the last twenty years has centered around Ray Brown—in trios and in small and big bands, some of them led by or fea-

turing pianist Gene Harris. There have been many records, tours spanning the world—such as the Philip Morris Super Band—and an extraordinary five-year period in the '90s with the virtuoso jazz pianist Oscar Peterson.

When I asked Oscar Peterson about his feelings regarding Jeff Hamilton, he quickly responded: "I love and miss him! Jeff's my idea of the consummate percussionist. He's more than a drummer! Jeff is a real *percussionist*—one of two men I know who actually plays melodies on his drums that I can readily discern and sing. Apart from that, he has a sense of time and taste that are impeccable."

Ray Brown, his friend and trusted counselor, adds: "I've worked with Jeff in a variety of settings, and he is possibly the most versatile drummer since Shelly Manne. We've done big band, small group, trio, and duo work. And he's great in each and every circumstance."

Says Jeff, "The greatest experience of my musical life was climbing on the stage at the Hollywood Bowl and playing to a sold-out house with Oscar and Ray Brown. It was a dream come true."

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Some amazing recordings result when Jeff takes the drum chair. Here are the albums he lists as most representative of his drumming.

Artist	Album Title (Label)
Jeff Hamilton Trio	Jeff Hamilton Trio—Live! (Mons)
Jeff Hamilton Trio	It's Hamilton Time (Lake Street)
Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orch	Absolutely! (Lake Street)
Ray Brown Trio	3 Dimensional (Concord)
Bill Holman Band	Bill Holman Band (JVC)
Monty Alexander, John Clayton, and Jeff Hamilton	Reunion In Europe (Concord)
Clayton Brothers	The Music (Capri)
Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orch	Heart And Soul (Capri)

These are the albums Jeff listens to most for inspiration.

Artist	Album Title	Drummer
Thad Jones/ Mel Lewis Orch	Complete Solid State	Mel Lewis
Oscar Peterson	The Trio Plays	Ed Thigpen
Ahmad Jamal	At The Pershing	Vernell Fournier
Count Basie	Chairman Of The Board	Sonny Payne
Miles Davis	Milestones	Philly Joe Jones
Duke Ellington	Piano In The Background	Sam Woodyard
Bill Evans Trio	Simple Matter Of Conviction/ Empathy	Shelly Manne
Clifford Brown/ Max Roach Quintet	A Study In Brown	Max Roach

The late Mel Lewis also had much to do with bringing out the best in Jeff Hamilton. Von Ohlen, Shelly Manne, Philly Joe Jones, and Woody Herman may have been crucial to his development, but Mel really showed him the way. Jeff first met the vociferous, bluntly honest, kind and caring drummer/bandleader while on the Dorsey band. He was encouraged by Mel, who advised him about equipment—cymbals, mostly—and suggested what he should be focusing on musically. Jeff was given the feeling that someone he respected very much liked him and had taken a great interest in his playing and progress. This was immensely important to him.

"I didn't dig Mel's playing immediately," Jeff admits. "The first Lewis recording that I heard meant very little to me. You must understand, I grew up with that rudimental background; the people who impressed me early on

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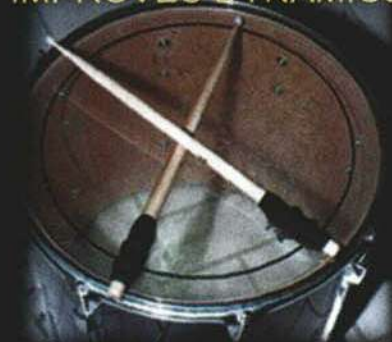
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had excellent technique—guys like Gene, Buddy, and Louie. If you couldn't cleanly execute rudiments, I couldn't use you. I didn't like Max or Blakey because I thought they were sloppy. And Mel didn't have the sort of chops that instantly got to me. He didn't seem to be doing anything, particularly in a big band.

"When I really started to listen, though, I 'discovered' Max and Blakey. And Mel became my model," Jeff remembers. "His wonderful time and taste took hold of me. Other people, like Von Ohlen, pointed out what was going on with Mel. I realized that he got all that energy out of a band by letting the guys play, retaining control in a quiet, unobtrusive way."

The memories continued to flow: "Mel and I used to discuss things for hours. I'd sit on the sofa in the living room of his large West End Avenue apartment in New York and do a lot of listening. He talked about his experiences and what he had learned. Mel never gave me any specific direction about anything. If I asked a question, he'd kind of lead me to a partial conclusion, allowing me to figure out the rest

of it myself."

What did Mel—and certainly Shelly Manne and Philly Joe Jones and other drummers who had an effect on him—bring to Jeff? An awareness of a number of things. Among the most important: that overplaying is a no-no; that the drummer has to be conscious of the whole picture in every musical circumstance; that flexibility is a great asset; that the drummer has to control matters and be both a provocative and assuring time source. They taught him about color. Above all, they insisted he listen and serve the music.

When listening to recordings on which Jeff plays, a few of the areas of his playing that are most impressive are his awareness of form, the musicality of his sound and rhythm, the fact that he does the job in a small or big band or with a singer without losing his identity. Stylistically he combines elements of the jazz past and present while seemingly contemplating the future. Swing is preeminent in his work. Jeff knows the literature—what other people have done and what is possible as the music changes. Plus, he allows himself the freedom to take chances.

I suggest you acquaint yourself with CDs by the Clayton/Hamilton Jazz Orchestra, which the drummer heads with John Clayton and his reed-playing brother Jeff. The Gene Harris Basie big band tribute on Concord tells a happy, pulsating story. Jeff is quite uplifting. The Ray Brown Trio set, *3 Dimensions* (also on Concord), is a fine example of how well Jeff, Ray Brown, and Gene Harris work together.

On big band recordings, Jeff brings small band behavior to a larger canvas, defining the dynamic outlines of each piece, forcing the issue when the music appeals for strength and explosiveness. He plays softly when the music and the chart demand a response of that kind. He tends to burrow within a group of musicians. Rarely obvious, he follows the intent of the music—linking segments and adding to the performance.

The artists with whom Jeff has worked—and their wide range of styles—indicate his capacity for adaptation to variable circumstances. They also support the fact that he serves music, musicians, and singers in a satisfying manner. Though tolerant, artists generally aren't that patient if the time and

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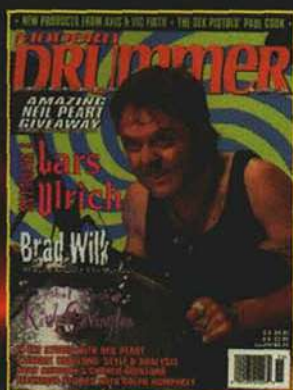
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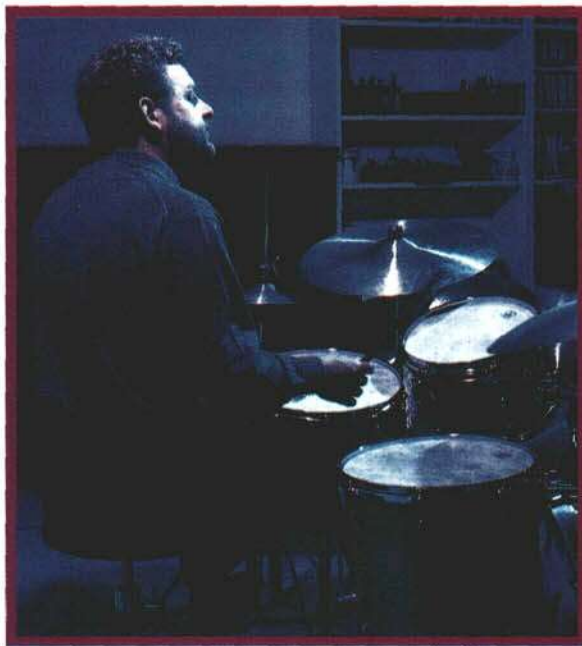
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the comments made by the drummer are not what they should be.

Among those who have employed Jeff are Ray Brown and Oscar Peterson, Benny Carter, Mel Torme, George Shearing, Ernestine Anderson, Bill Holman, Rosemary Clooney, Natalie Cole, Herb Alpert, Frank Sinatra, Barbra Streisand, Clark Terry, Dr. John, Dee Dee Bridgewater and Wynton Marsalis, Keely Smith—the list goes on and on.

It's almost inevitable that a successful sideman will ultimately become a leader of a group or orchestra. Jeff already has an orchestra; now his focus is a trio—with Lynn Seaton on bass and Larry Fuller on piano. "The trio is a comment on the way I think music should be played," Jeff says. "I get a chance to write and, as the boss, I'm a bit more in control of things. I don't emphasize the role of the drummer, though it doesn't take too long to realize that the leader might well be the drummer.

"I feel a band, no matter its size, should



cover the dynamic range possible for instrumentation," he continues. "A concern for dynamics is missing in a lot of music today. Most musicians start with *mezzo forte* and go from there. You can't reach deep into your emotions if you're playing too loud. So you have to start from ground

zero and see what you can add to silence that'll make the music have meaning...and communicate as well. Sometimes silence is better than anything you have to say."

The first of three CDs by the trio, *Jeff Hamilton Trio, Live!*, was recently released by Mons, a German company. The performances tell you that the musicians have achieved a warm, close family feeling. There is unity of musical conception. "We're on the same wavelength," Jeff suggests. "We feed one another and interrelate very well. There's freedom and discipline, feeling and swing."

Jeff makes things move. His playing is fluid, his fills interesting and colorful. Jeff's drum sound is warm, rarely overbearing. Drum solos emerge from the musical fabric. This drummer has gotten to a point where his commentary is seldom a matter of flash and hand speed.

"I love Jeff's groove, his unerring swing," Lynn Seaton says. "We have a beautiful hook-up. I love my role—playing

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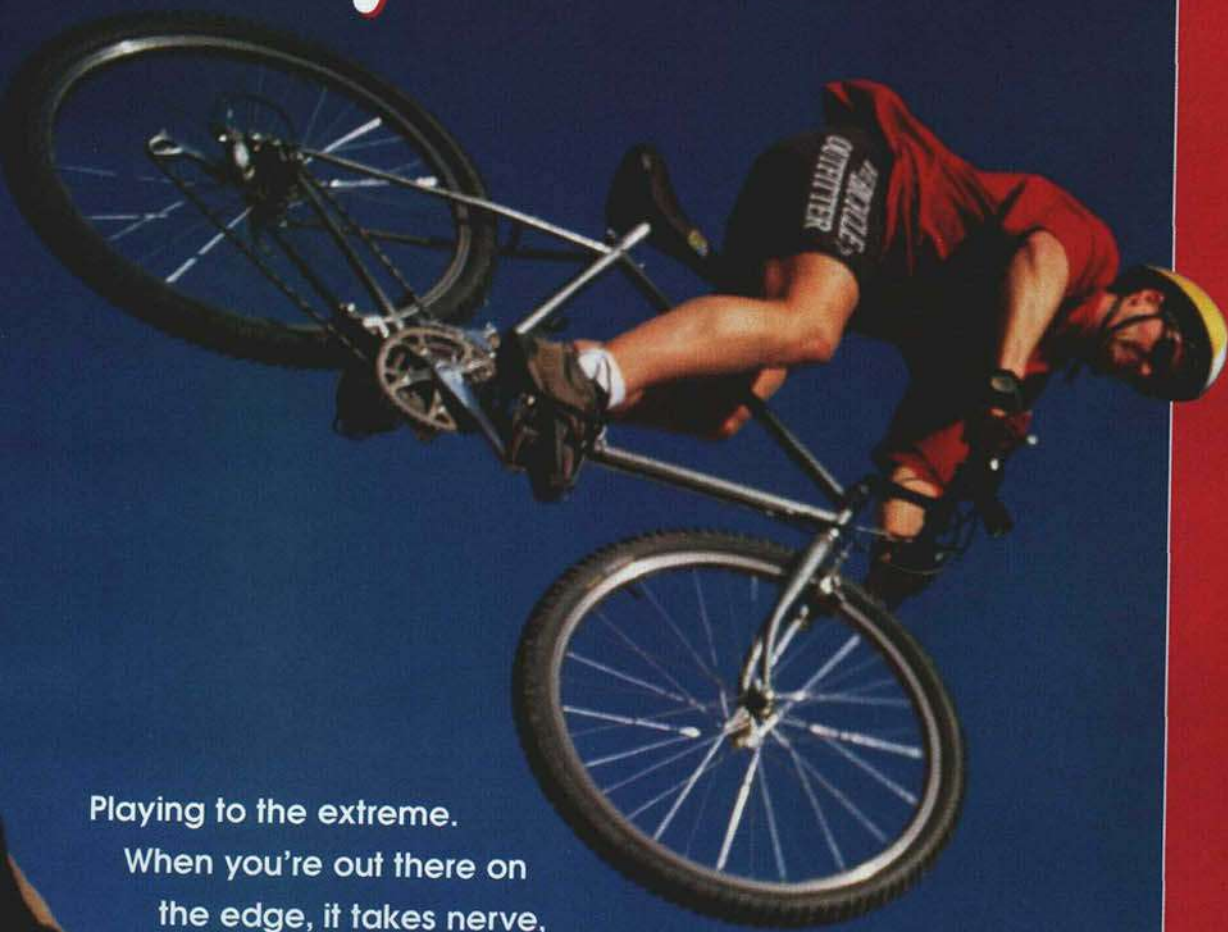
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time." Seaton laughs, then says: "My, how fun flies when you're playing time!"

Larry Fuller comments, "Jeff is one of an elite group of drummers. It's the feeling he gets when he plays that does it for me. Jeff's a good leader. There is an exchange of ideas; he's open. That makes the group that much stronger."

The trio plans to work four months a year, mostly in Europe. Jeff is no stranger there, having played regularly with the WDR band in Cologne and in a variety of countries on tour. At this writing, Jeff, Lynn, and Larry are in the midst of a month of one-nighters in Europe. During a call from Germany, Jeff expressed excitement about the group's prospects and how good the music felt.

Outside the trio, Hamilton has multiple, diverse opportunities: "I'm enjoying the calls I'm getting," he says. "You never know who's going to be on the other end of the phone. I'm really lucky, being able to select who I play with. Everything is working out very well.

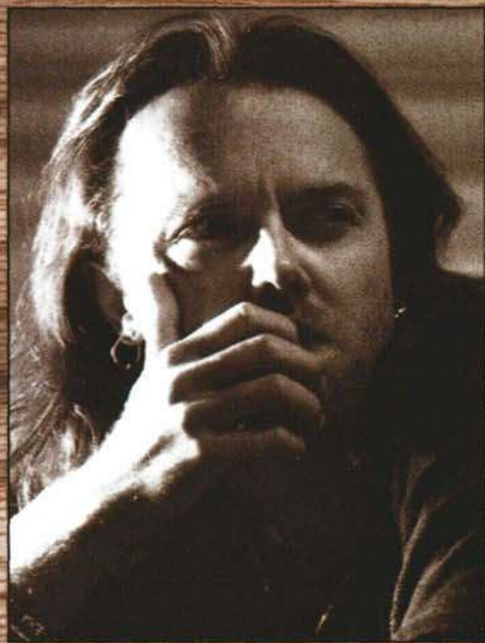
"I have only one major beef, and it concerns many of today's young drummers,"

he adds. "They only think about chops and equipment. I'm on sort of a crusade. It's the music and musicality they should be talking about—not whether a drummer has a good left hand or a fast foot.

"I think the days of jam sessions, when the really good players would turn around and threaten the wayward drummer, should be brought back. The person back there shouldn't be allowed to play a lot of unnecessary stuff—he should just lay it in there, four beats on the ride cymbal, push and swing!

"There's too much leniency in this music. People don't know what swinging is. Leaders hire a drummer with a lot of chops because he's flashy, showy. The bottom line should be the time and the feeling. Stimulating musicians and singers and making them comfortable is our job. If drummers do what they should, musicians will like and hire them.

"I certainly learned this from Mel, and from Ray Brown, Milt Jackson, and others, too. It comes down to listening and doing your homework—knowing the craft."



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Zachary

Like the center on a winning basketball team, Zachary Alford has built a reputation as a strong, dynamic, and reliable pivotman around which ambitious artists can confidently attack deep, new territory.

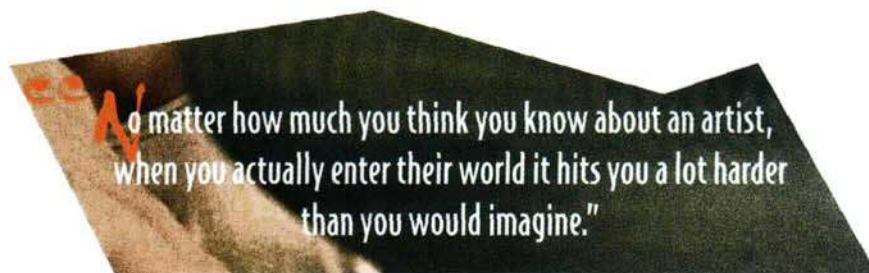
Rock-solid yet capable of blazing drum commentary, Alford has found himself in similarly pivotal points in his employers' careers: When Billy Joel felt it was time to make changes to his lineup in 1986 for *River Of Dreams*, Zachary got the call. Likewise, Bruce Springsteen's post-E Street Band concerts featured the drummer adding life to the Boss's highly regarded *Human Touch/Lucky Town* work. And when the B-52's burst back on the scene with the huge "Love Shack" single, it was Zachary's energetic playing that kicked the band back into video and live mass consciousness.

Nineteen ninety-seven finds Alford helping

shots at different songs. We didn't start one song and finish it, we worked on different songs at the same time.

AB: In our interview with David [July '97 MD], he explained that he would have you play a few bars, and then they would sample and loop that.

ZA: We did that for a couple of songs, but for a lot of the other songs they already had loops. They had actually done a lot of the other songs the week or two before we came in. Then we spent two weeks doing all our stuff. We'd listen to what they had and then David would say, "Who wants to start?" If it was me, I'd do like two passes. They would either use one of the performances or a composite of the two. Sometimes we might have taken a verse from one pass and flipped it onto the other tape because the feel was better, or there would be a fill that we just couldn't lose even though the



spike David Bowie's most challenging and popular material in ten years. Along with Bowie collaborator/guitarist Reeves Gabrels, longtime keyboardist Mike Garson, and welcome bass presence Gail Ann Dorsey, Zachary provocatively injects soul, glamour, and boundless experimentation into the singer's new bass & drums-influenced *Earthling* collection. We met up with Zachary over lunch at New York's Time Cafe while the band was in town rehearsing for their *Saturday Night Live* performance.

AB: What was the process of recording drum parts for *Earthling*?

ZA: We pieced it together really fast. Reeves and David made skeletons for the songs with loops, and then Gail, Mike, and I would take

feel was not as good on the other pass. But otherwise those fills happened at that time; the performances are pretty much as they were played. A lot of drums were added after the fact. On "Telling Lies," I played the jungle loops.

AB: And then they sped that up?

ZA: Yeah. I flipped the snare drum over and played on the bottom of it, because when we sped up the regular snare drum, it ended up sounding too "Mickey Mousey." That's a trick I learned from my friend Sterling Campbell. You get a real dry, crisp sound when you play the bottom head, similar to if you put a piece of tape on the bottom and played the top. I gave the engineer, Mark Plati, a lot of fodder for that, and then he came up with all these loop combinations.

An important thing to keep in mind when playing to sequences is to relax. It's like meditation: You hit that place and it becomes effortless."



AB: You really put your playing into their hands, in effect saying, "Cut and paste, chop up, take what you want from my performances." Is it hard to not get precious about your playing in that situation?

ZA: Oh, yeah, you definitely have to be able to divorce yourself from the music to some extent. Part of maturing is being able to know what's best for the song.

I think one of the most valuable exercises a drummer or any musician can do to develop that kind of objectivity is to invest in a home studio, either a 4-track or a digital recorder. When you actually have to do all the parts yourself, there is no room for ego. If you want to cut something out, you just do it. You're not attached to it; all you're concerned about is getting a good final product. When I started doing that it really opened my mind to what going into the studio is about. It's about working together with everyone involved with the project, and doing what's best for the song.

AB: You're putting yourself in the songwriter mindset.

ZA: Yeah. I mean, just doing sessions is

of learning the material to play it live?

ZA: I was in the studio doing a session, and whenever I had a moment I would go into another room that wasn't being used, pop on a tape of *Outside*, put the headphones on, and play along with it.

AB: When you played the *Outside* material live, were you dealing with playing along to sequences?

ZA: Yeah.

AB: How do you feel about that?

ZA: It's a blessing and a curse. The downside is that you have to give the machine priority in your monitor mix, so you are not interacting as much with the other players as you would if there were no machines. But the up side of it is that nobody can tell you that you are playing slow one night and fast the next night, [laughs] because you are playing exactly the same. If you were to change the order of the songs, you'd be surprised how different the tempos would feel. Suddenly a tune that is medium feels like it's racing—or dragging—just because it's been put after a different song. So context is everything.

not enough, because you're still sort of in this mentality of "you against the engineer," or you're going in there to blow everyone away. That's not what it's about. That's your ego, and that's going to get in the way of true creativity.

AB: Recording for *Earthling* began right after the tour for David's *Outside* album, right?

ZA: Yeah. In fact, we did "Telling Lies" during a break while we were on tour.

AB: You joined the band before that tour. What was the process

AB: With the sequences, do you have tempo count-offs coming in on the monitors?

ZA: Yeah. I have headphones, and I have a count-off.

AB: Are you dictating when that starts?

ZA: No, that's controlled off stage.

AB: So for a good two hours you have to be "in the moment" all the time.

ZA: Yeah...I never thought about it that way. The fact that somebody *else* is starting the sequences actually adds even *more* stress.

AB: Do you worry about tempo when there aren't any machines going?

ZA: Yeah, because we would do a couple of tunes live—no loops, no click—and it stuck out, you noticed it. Suddenly you were grasping. It's also a little tough because when your mix is constructed in a way that the drums are in one place, the click is in one place, the vocals are in one place, and the guitars and everything have a certain balance, suddenly you feel like you would need to customize a whole new mix to feel right. So it's a little tough. You have to adjust.

AB: When you're playing along to the machines, how do you keep that "live" element without sounding sloppy? Is it a matter of where you're placing the beat, either ahead or behind, or is it even something you have to be conscious of?

ZA: Oh, you really do have to think about where you're placing the beat. Again, it comes down to listening, because with sequencers, you suddenly realize how much space there is in front of and behind the beat. A sequence is going to be pretty unforgiving if you're not going to be in time with it—people will know. I think an important thing to keep in mind when you are playing with loops or sequences is to relax. If you look at a drummer like Omar Hakim, he's *slamming* the drums, but he's so relaxed. That's something I've always tried to do, especially when you play with loops—and even with other players. Relaxation, I think, is the key—though it is

A l f o r d

not necessarily an easy thing to do. [laughs] I've had to make a conscious effort to do it because I naturally get really hyped up and physical when I play. *I feel* it so much.

It's like meditation when you play with a sequence or a loop. You'll know as soon as you hit that place—you'll feel it—where you're grooving right with it, and suddenly it becomes effortless. The way to sustain that is by relaxing once you get there.

AB: What situation had you come off of right before Bowie hired you?

ZA: I was doing a bunch of side projects for artists who were either having their first deal or getting ready to develop a deal. The last tour I was on before that was the Springsteen tour.

AB: Did the nature of *Earthling* force you to think about your playing differently than you had with previous artists?

ZA: What was different with Bowie was that there was much more of a demand to play metronomically accurate, but at the same time there was a lot more room in the music for expression. Bruce's music is not as experimental; it's more traditional. It would be inappropriate to burn a lot of chops over it.

AB: How much freedom was there in David's music?

ZA: Total freedom. Both on Bruce's gig and on David's gig I was pretty much free to interpret the music as I had heard it, and I could hear when a fill was appropriate and when it wasn't.

AB: When you start working with someone like Bruce or David, who has pretty firm ideas about what the music should sound like, do they need to express that verbally? Or do they assume because they've hired you that they really don't need to do any more explaining?

ZA: I think in general they feel that they don't need to do much more explaining. But there's always going to be a case when they have a specific idea and they'll tell you. There might be a point when they just

hear it a certain way, like Bruce will actually have a specific fill he wants to hear in a certain place, and nothing more. So he has his way of saying, "Here's an area where I really don't want you to deviate too much from it," and that's what's totally defined. You want to realize an artist's vision.

I've used all my gigs as opportunities to expand my horizons. When I played with Bruce it opened my mind up to a lot of soul music, because that's what Bruce loves. Whenever we were on the bus or on our plane, he would be blasting soul tapes. With David it's really opened my mind up to a lot of electronic music. You definitely go into a different head space depending on who you are working with, and hopefully it's an enlightening experience. I've been pretty lucky to work with really talented artists who have a lot to offer. No matter how much you think you know about someone, when you actually enter their world it hits you a lot harder than you would imagine.

AB: You've auditioned for some high-profile acts. What sort of things are you thinking about before an audition? Do you try to anticipate what the artist is going to want?

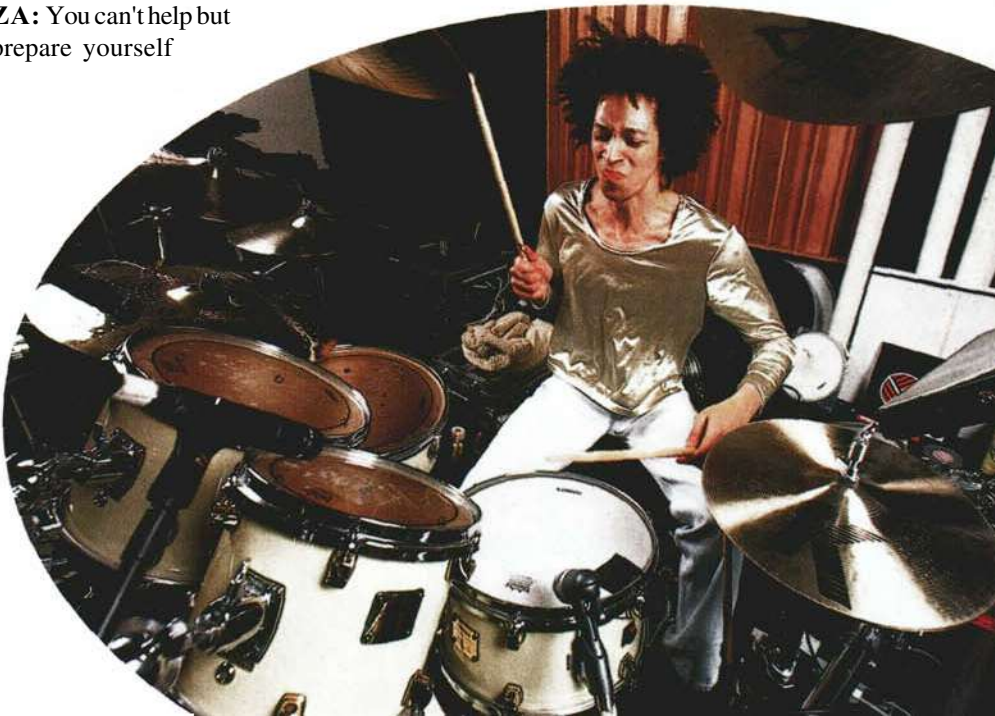
ZA: You can't help but prepare yourself

in some way. Experience will tell you that you have to remain open, because you really don't know what they are going to be like or what they are going to want. At the same time, you're at your best when you do what you do naturally, so you should be straight up and play it the way you feel it.

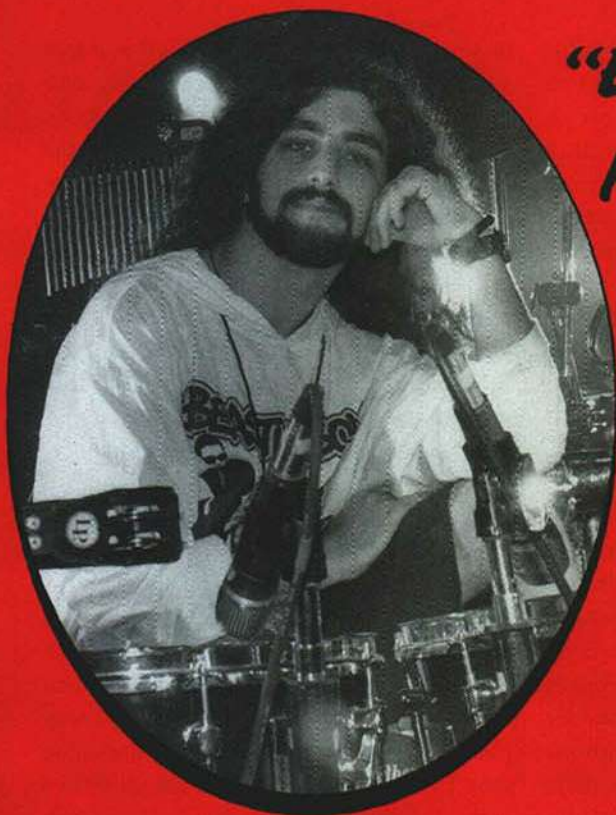
AB: There are people who say that if you want to play a lot of different kinds of gigs, you have to be chameleon-like. Do you feel that way, or do you think it's more important to have a strong sense of self?

ZA: Someone called me a chameleon once, because going from B-52's to Bruce to Bowie...they seem very different. But I was comfortable with each one of the gigs. I played differently on all of them, but I played the way I heard them. You can't play a B-52's gig like a fusion drummer—that would sound bad. So, on the one hand I feel like I've always applied the same philosophy to every gig, but at the same time I feel like I've played them all differently. It helps if you've got good instincts and somewhat of a wide musical vocabulary so that you can relate to different kinds of music.

AB: Do you have to be a fan of the music?



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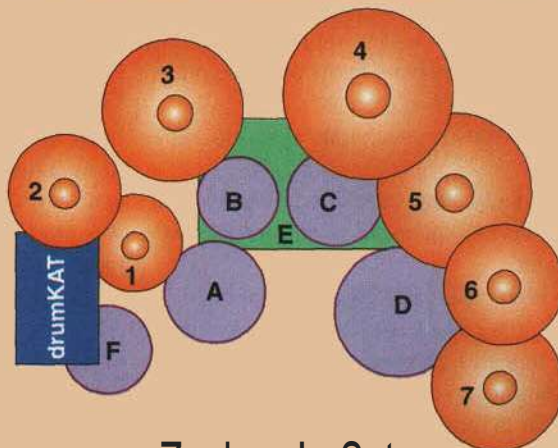
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ZA: No, you don't have to be a fan. You just have to give the situation what is called for. In some cases it's *worse* if you are a fan, because then you bring in all these preconceived ideas. Someone like David doesn't necessarily want to relive the past. He wants

to move into new areas, so he wants someone who is going to bring something different and reinterpret what he's done; a fan might be too concerned with re-creating what's already been done.

AB: What were your early playing experi-

ences like?

ZA: I played around clubs in New York City since I was fourteen, mostly in the East Village.

AB: I imagine growing up a drummer in the city forces you to make certain sacrifices.

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Zach Alford

(David Bowie)



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ZA: I grew up in the projects, and *everybody* made noise. My mom didn't care whether I was playing in my room, so practicing was never a problem.

AB: Obviously your mom was very supportive.

ZA: Totally supportive. I don't know if I could be as supportive as she was. I owe her a lot.

AB: Were your early gigs mostly rock?

ZA: I first considered myself a funk drummer, though I grew up listening to a lot of rock music. So a lot of those elements were familiar to me.

AB: Do you think certain gigs prepared you for being able to handle the different types of musical situations you'd later find yourself in?

ZA: My first tours were on the underground, avant-garde funk scene that was coming out of New York in the mid-'80s, which I suppose prepared me for jazz gigs; those musicians would do jazz festivals in Europe a lot. I worked with the alumni of Defunkt—Melvin Gibbs, and then Kelvynator. I met those guys from playing in the clubs, and a situation opened up in '87 where Melvin was going to Europe to

do a festival, and he put a band together that included Vernon Reid on guitar and DK Dyson on vocals. It was just one gig in Switzerland, but it seems like I've sort of been on a roll since then. In '89 I was lucky enough to hook up with the B-52's, and that was a great year for them. That was originally supposed to be a five-week tour, but it turned into their big comeback. So that was a lot of fun.

AB: Does that kind of situation put your name on a different grapevine?

ZA: Yeah. Suddenly I was in a video that today is still being played. The tour became high-profile, and that's when I got my Yamaha endorsement. It was definitely a change. From there I recorded some of their next record, and then I toured with Bruce.

AB: How did the Springsteen gig come about?

ZA: Everything I've done has been from word of mouth. I don't have a manager or an agent or anything like that. I've always been recommended for gigs. Bruce hired someone to locate potential musicians, and I got called for an audition.

AB: How did that go?

ZA: That was funny, because he actually flew me back to Los Angeles five times before he finally told me that I was going to make the cut. So that was kind of a nerve-racking month.

AB: Did you say at that point, "So why did you finally choose me?"

ZA: No. [laughs] You don't question. You're just so happy that you can finally relax.

AB: But you must get an idea fairly soon afterwards why you were chosen above the other people. I would imagine you have a checklist of things like, "If I can be steady, if I can be on time, if I know the material, then I should get this," and then you evaluate how you did later.

ZA: I don't think there's something you can really put your finger on. There are auditions you get; there are auditions you don't get. It's tough because you don't usually know the person, so you don't know how to read them. I'm never sure until I get that first paycheck. [laughs] I'm usually optimistic, but that doesn't mean that I've got it.

AB: So *do* you have a checklist of things that you need to get together before you go into an audition? Is it a skill that you

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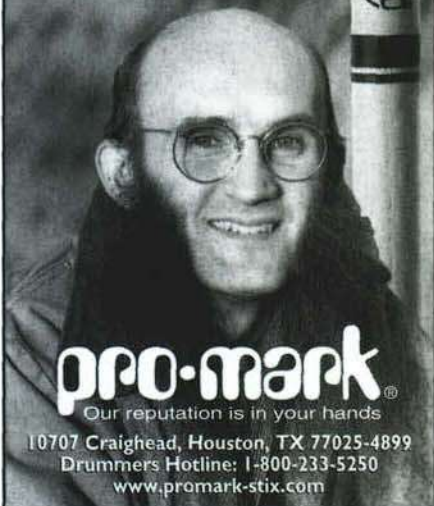
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learn—how to audition?

ZA: If it is, I haven't learned it. [laughs, then long pause] God, I hate auditions.

AB: Really?

ZA: Oh, yeah.... You just try to be as open as possible and go with the flow. That's the best thing to do. I've also been on the other side of it, on the team that is auditioning the new guys—which is almost worse. That's *terrible*. But you just want to be as natural as possible. Try to figure out some way to be comfortable.

AB: Do you zero in on a particular player? Do you try to lock in with the bass player?

ZA: Every situation is going to be different.

AB: You read it as you get there?

ZA: Yeah, exactly. You have to be *in* the moment. That's the whole thing—being *in* the moment, because maybe in this particular rhythm section the bass player is not giving you what you need to lock into. Maybe you need to lock into the guitar player more. Maybe the singer is the one to follow. There's no formula, but the signs are everywhere; you just have to be receptive to them. You kind of have to do a little

"Sherlock Holmes" deal.

AB: You play very hard and physically. Have you always played that way?

ZA: Pretty much. I've always believed in hitting the drums hard.

AB: Is that different in the studio versus live?

ZA: I play louder live because I hate seeing a complacent drummer. If I go to see a band and I'm not feeling the drums from the audience—even though they may sound fine on stage—then I get pissed off. So when I do a gig I try to play the room and not just the little place on the stage. I want to feel that the playing is proportionate to the dimensions of the space.

AB: What about in the studio?

ZA: Well, microphones are not as advanced as the human ear, so you can actually play so loud that a microphone won't pick the sound up as well; it won't get all the nuances, all the tone. And you can play a drum so loud that you actually choke it. The lighter you play, the fuller the sound the microphone will be able to pick up.

AB: How big a difference are we talking? Is it a significant thing, or is it a matter of just pulling back a little bit?

ZA: It's significant.

AB: Are there things that you have to compensate for when pulling back?

ZA: No. The key is in adjusting your headphone mix so that you don't have to play as loud. I have a hard time not hitting hard. I have to make a conscious effort to play softer when I'm in the studio, but I'm always happy with the results.

Also, the softer you play, the more it forces you to listen to the other players as well as to yourself. Being able to hear yourself, I think, is a skill that a lot of drummers need to develop—to really listen to yourself *while* you are playing. When you listen back to it you can hear *whether* you are speeding up or slowing down. But when you are in the moment, you can't always tell.

AB: It's almost sort of taking yourself out of the situation.

ZA: It's kind of an out-of-body experience, a very Zen kind of approach.

AB: Do you find yourself practicing certain things?

ZA: I don't find myself practicing at all. [laughs]

AB: Is that because of time constraints?

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ZA: It's due to the fact that I like to spend a lot of time with my daughter and my wife. But if I do practice...if I play a tour where I'm playing a lot of the same tunes every night, then I want to practice something different from that, like improvising. But if you're a drummer who does that all the time on the job, then maybe what you need to do is practice with a metronome.

AB: Let's talk about the Billy Joel album you played on, *River Of Dreams*. Billy had decided not to use people he had been with for a while. Was replacing Liberty DeVitto an issue for you?

ZA: It wasn't an issue to me until after the fact, when I saw the documentary they did for the album. I kind of got a lump in my throat when I saw Liberty talking. But it was a job. We went in and did it.

AB: Did Billy have any specific requests of the players?

ZA: The producer, Danny Kortchmar, was pretty much calling the shots on that. He was the one who put the band together, and Billy trusted him to do what the situation called for.

I did bring preconceived notions into the situation, which I wish I hadn't. I wish I had been a little more open. What they were looking for was something that would groove more, and I basically played it the way that I heard it, instead of trying to do exactly what the producer wanted. I think that I've matured since then. If I had the chance to do that again, I probably would have simplified my playing...I think I was just a little overambitious. That's why I say in certain situations you really have to come in almost as an empty vessel and provide.... I feel like I'm contradicting myself, because on the one hand you have to do what you feel, but on the

other hand you have to be appropriate.

AB: It sounds like your idea of groove was different from theirs.

ZA: No, my idea was the same.... [long pause] It's like what they were asking for just went in one ear and out the other, because all I could think about was, "Here's my chance to prove to the world how good I am." And when you do that, that's kind of like your ego taking precedence over the music. If I had the chance to do that again, I would probably check my ego at the door and adapt to the situation.

I worked with Danny Kortchmar again, on Curtis Stigers' last album, and I'm much happier with the results. I played more simply, and I feel that the music benefited more because of that.

AB: Have there been situations where you listened to things you've done and thought that you in fact needed to play *more*?

ZA: Yes. In my earlier experience of recording I'd wished that I could have been freer. Experience is the only thing that is going to teach you what's right at the right time. You really have to just go in there and get your feet wet, and then after a while you'll be able to feel what's appropriate. There's no real easy or quick way to develop that. Learning can be a slow, painful process.

AB: Let's get back to Bowie. Tell me about the 50th Birthday Concert at Madison Square Garden. That must have been a complicated affair to pull off, with so many artists coming on and off the stage, plus all the sequencers and visuals. Were there extensive rehearsals ahead of time?

ZA: Usually the last rehearsals before a tour involve running the whole show from top to bottom so that you can pace it. We did the rehearsals for that show in sections, but we didn't play the whole show through until the actual performance. You could sort of feel us holding on by the skin of our teeth, which I think adds the energy that's necessary to make a show more exciting.

AB: David said that he felt nervous before the show. Were the bandmembers feeling that?

ZA: Absolutely, because it was very ambitious. There were a lot of elements—some, like the forty-foot screen, dating back to the 1990 *Sound And Vision* tour. So it felt a bit disjointed. As I say we did the show in sections, so no one could really see whether there was continuity or not. On the last day of rehearsals, we didn't have all the guests, but we ran as close to the whole show as we could, and we finally saw that all these elements *could* work together. I think if you see the video of the show, you'll see that there is always something different to watch, yet there is a continuity.

AB: Did the fact that there were guest musicians affect you? I mean, they were rolling other drumkits on the stage during songs. All of a sudden you're playing with other drummers.


ZA: It helped keep it exciting. And like I said before, I've got a priority in my mix, and I'm hearing the click and loops almost before anything else. So the extraneous factors didn't affect me so much.

AB: One of the images that stayed with me was watching Dave Grohl. He's such a presence behind the kit.

ZA: That was a great moment for me too. He's an animal. There really was a great vibe among all the musicians. I'm glad it turned out that way. It wasn't just for show, it was about having a good time.

AB: You're often on the road for long stretches. How do you find

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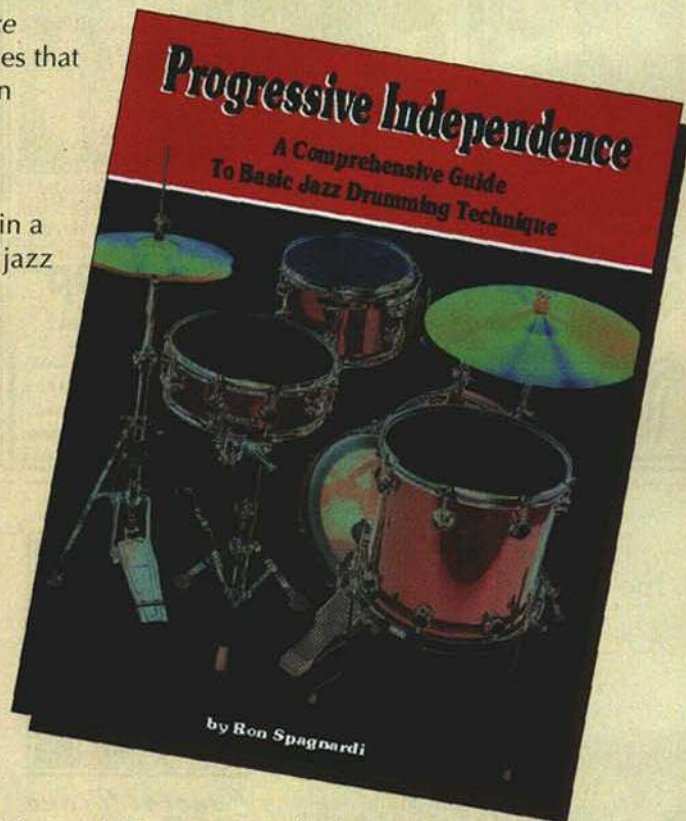
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the touring situation?

ZA: A tour can either be a living hell or a total vacation, depending on the chemistry of the people—if you have something in common, if you get along. It's funny, everybody in Bowie's band is different, but we share a lot of common interests. I've heard David say that this is the happiest band he's ever been with as far as people getting along and actually caring for each other. That's so important, because when you are living on the road, that's your life for the next X number of months.

A lot of people talk about how hard it is to be on the road, but I can't relate to that because I've never done a tour in a van. Buses are great, because it's like your home on the road. You've got your own phone, you've got a fridge, you can walk around in your pajamas, throw on a video. And on a successful tour, I stay in five-star hotels and I don't have to set up my gear. It's almost a break from reality. Also, everyone I've worked with has been very health-conscious; I've always tried to stay healthy and in shape on the road. Sometimes I'm healthier on the road than I am when I'm home. [laughs] If you're smart you'll try to keep the partying to a minimum, because if you get sick on the road you really will be sorry.

Also, when you work with an artist on the level of David or Bruce, they don't do more than two consecutive shows. They want to make sure that the band is in top form so that when they have to do the show, they can do it. I've been blessed: All my tour situations have been good ones—from the B-52's to Bruce to David. That's an experience I think very few people can expect to have.



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Progressive Independence

Part 2: The Bass Drum

by Ron Spagnardi

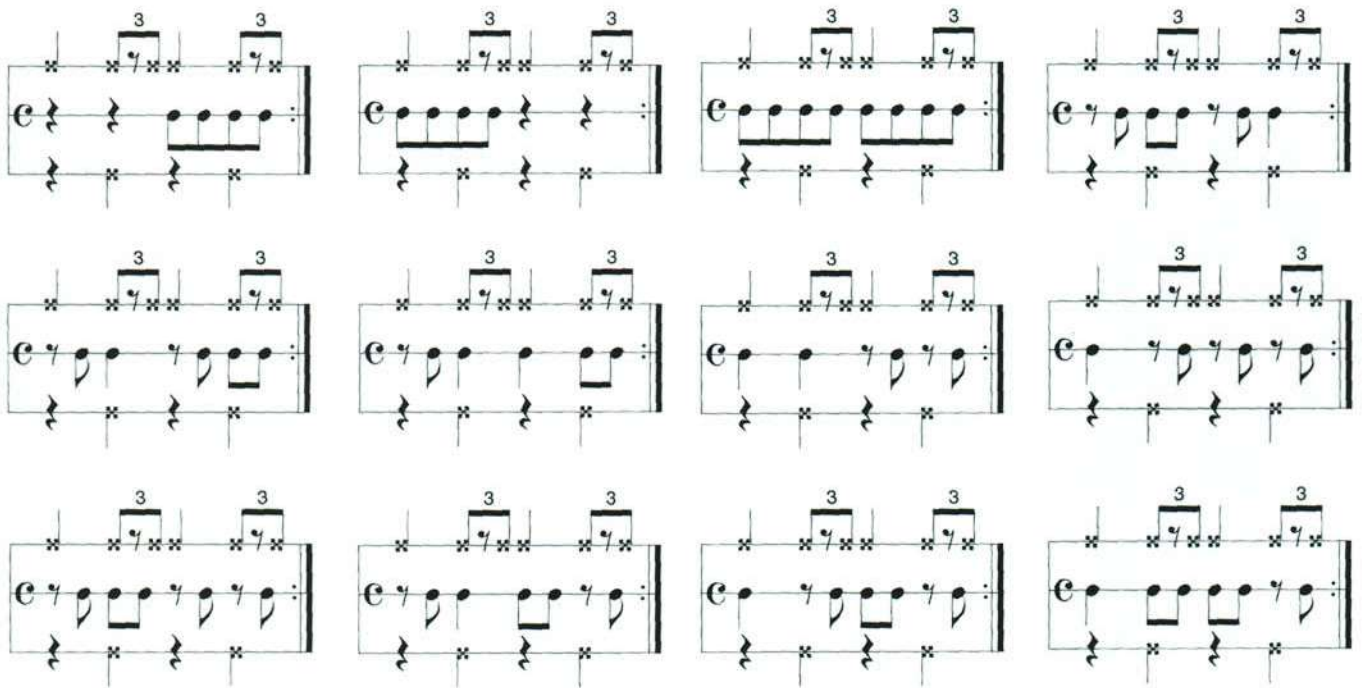
Last month we began this series on jazz independence by focusing on snare drum variations against the constant ride cymbal, bass drum, and hi-hat pattern. This month we'll take the concept one step further, and explore ways to increase your independence chops on the bass drum.

Quarter-Note Patterns

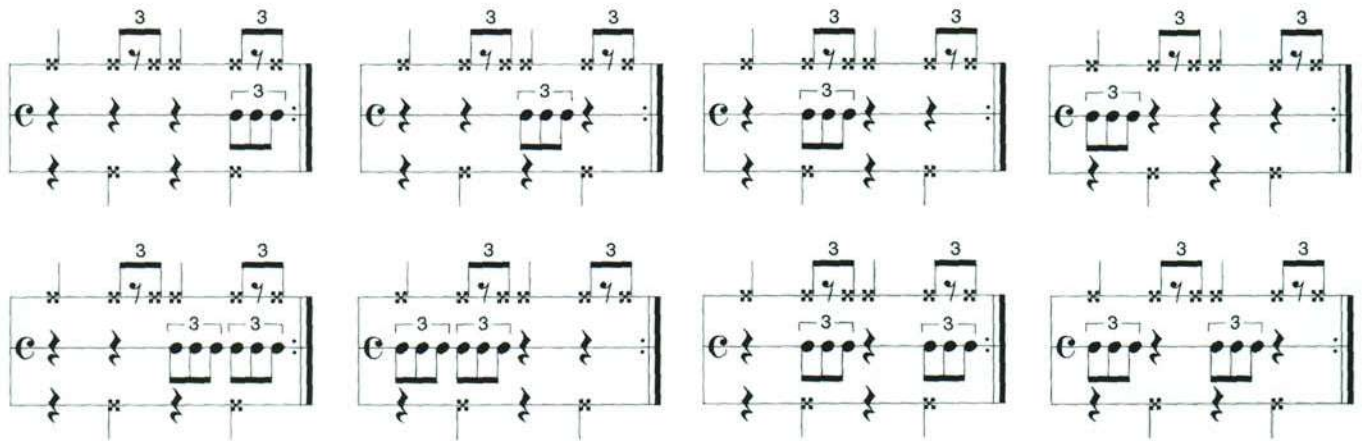
Similar to last month's focus on snare drum independence, this month's study of bass drum independence begins with quarter notes. Take your time with this section since the foot rarely reacts as quickly and as easily as the hand. Practice each exercise slowly and steadily, and do not increase the speed until you are totally comfortable with each one.

8th-Note Patterns

Eighth notes on the bass drum must also be played with a "jazz interpretation." Be sure the bass drum figures are accurately synchronized with the ride cymbal. You will naturally develop a greater degree of strength and control of the bass drum foot with the dedicated practice of these exercises.

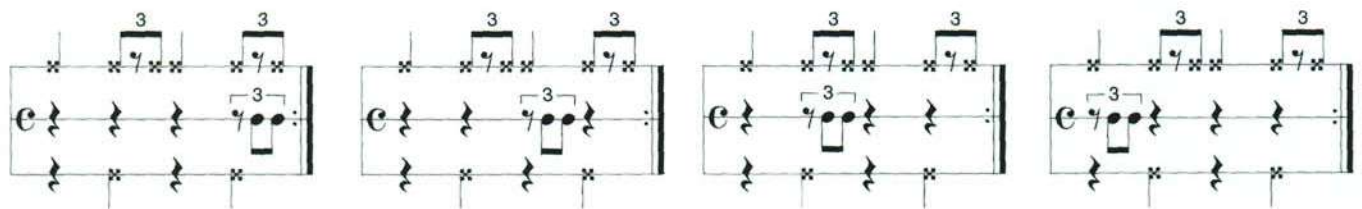


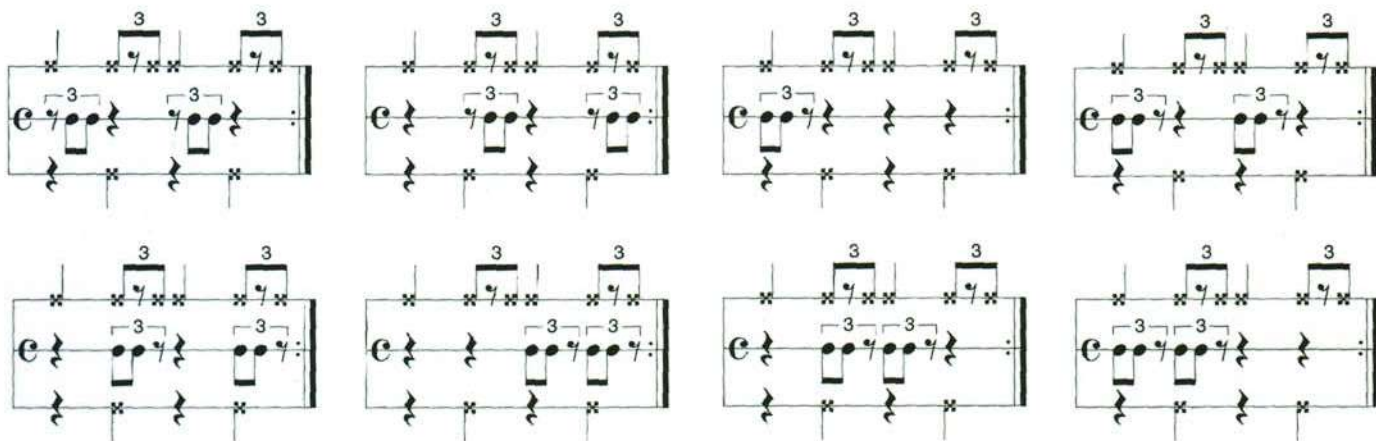
Triplet Patterns



Triplet Partial

Be sure to focus on accuracy rather than speed in this section. Control is the key goal here.





Summary Exercise

1

5

9

13

17

21

Next month we'll combine the snare drum and bass drum independence patterns.

This article was excerpted from Ron Spagnardi's book Progressive Independence (© Copyright 1997, Modern Drummer Publications).

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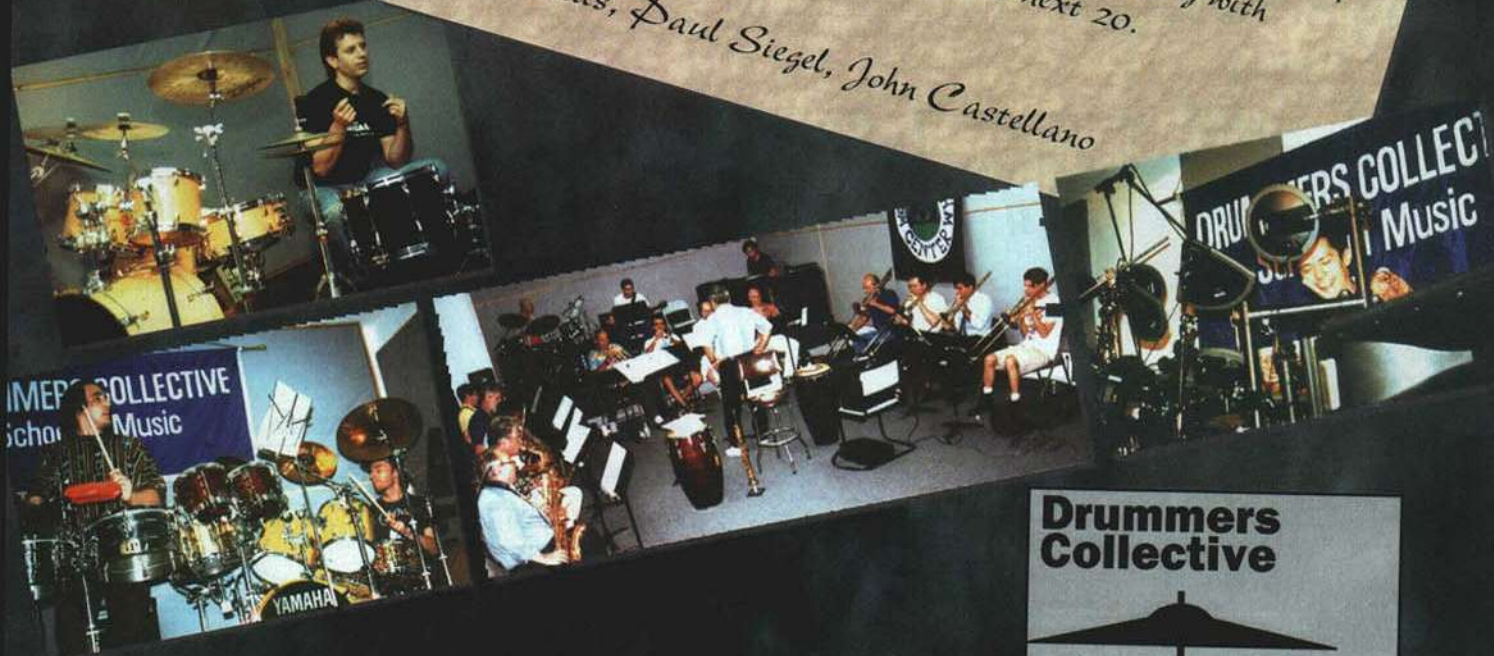
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The Flam Accent Challenge, Part 2

by Chet Doboe

This two-part series of articles focuses on the creative potential of the flam accent. The exciting dialog created by contrasting flams, accents, and non-accents makes the flam accent a "syncopation beast" that, when controlled, is a powerful device to build intense rhythmic phrases.

Applied in the context of 16th notes, the three-note phrasing of

the flam accent creates a natural syncopation against the four-note scheme of 16th notes. Therefore, the following exercises apply the flam accent exercises that were laid out in Part 1 in the framework of 16th notes. (It may be helpful to refer to August's *Rudimental Symposium* for those exercises.)

Perform all non-accented flams and taps from a low stick height. Tap quarter notes with your foot.

RLR LRL RLR LRL RLRL RLR LRL RLR LRL RLRL

RLR LRL RLR LRL RLRL RLR LRL RLR LRL RLRL

RLR LRL RLR LRL RLRL RLR LRL RLR

The following ideas are built by moving the flam to the second note of the flam accent figure. As mentioned last month, this variation is the hybrid drum rudiment called "tajada."

R LRL RLR LRL RLR LRL RLR LRL R LRL RLR LRL RLR LRL

R LRL RLR LRL RLR LRL RLR LRL R LRL RLR LRL RLR LRL

These variations place the flam on the third note of the flam accent figure.

RL RLR LRL RLR LRL RL RL RLR LRL RLR LRL RL

RL RLR LRL RLR LRL RL RL RLR LRL RLR LRL RL

This exercise features the use of two flams in each flam accent variation. Be sure to maintain the quality and uniformity of the flams.

RL RLR LRL RLR LRL RL RL RLR LRL RLR LRL RL

RL RLR LRL RLR LRL RL RL RLR LRL RLR LRL RL

RL RLR LRL RLR LRL RL RL RLR LRL RLR LRL RL

Here's a short demonstration of how we can use the previous ideas to create a fun musical statement.

fp *f*

p

f *ff*

Chet Doboe is well known to drum corps and rudimental enthusiasts as the founder and leader of the innovative corps-style quartet Hip Pickles. He is also the author of several drumset books.



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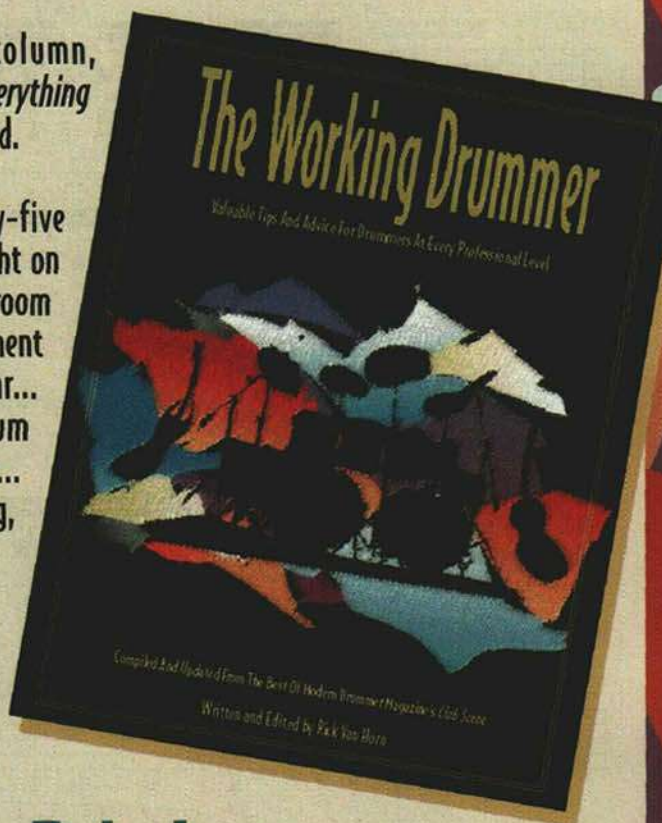
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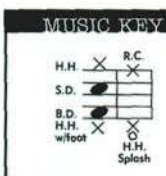
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MOD4



A Different Slant For The Hi-Hat, Part 2

by Rod Morgenstein



Let's pick up where we left off last time (December '96 *MD*) and examine a few more untraditional, interesting ways to use the hi-hat foot.

Playing a continuous pattern (such as 8ths, 16ths, or triplets) between the riding hand and hi-hat foot creates a different sound and feel from playing the pattern exclusively with the riding hand. Examples 1 and 2 should be practiced with the goal of having as little open hi-hat sound as possible. Strive for a consistent, closed effect.



Examples 3 and 4 add the bass drum to these riding hand/hi-hat foot patterns.

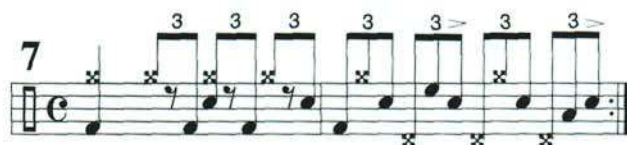


Example 5 suggests switching back and forth between traditional one-handed 16ths with two beats played in the "untraditional" manner.



Examples 6 through 9 involve a repeating three-note pattern that works well as a beat or fill. The patterns in examples 6 and 8 consist of hi-hat foot/hi-hat hand/snare, while the patterns in examples

7 and 9 are hi-hat foot/tom/snare preceded by a one-measure beat.



Examples 10 and 11 are essentially non-continuous linear patterns (with the exception of the downbeat of beat 4 in example 10) that integrate the hi-hat foot into the syncopation. Also, examples 11 and 12 incorporate the ride cymbal.



Example 12 is similar to a pattern I heard Steve Gadd play some years ago. For contrast (and practice) alternate each measure, first playing the hi-hat closed (with the foot) and then splashing it (for an open sound).



Robin Goodridge: "Swallowed"

Transcribed by Vincent DeFrancesco



MUSIC KEY

Open	○	CC	×
H.H.	○	×	×
S.D.	●	×	×
B.D.	●	×	×

This month's *Rock Charts* features the simple but powerful drum stylings of Bush's Robin Goodridge, from the band's recent Number-1 album, *Razorblade Suitcase*. Goodridge creates a "sloppy" feel on this track by riding hard on his half-opened hi-hats and sitting back on the backbeat, but the groove is solid and full of attitude. Things get a bit syncopated at letters C and E, where

Robin fills out the pattern on the snare drum. A strong track that fits the band's sound perfectly.

♩ = 88

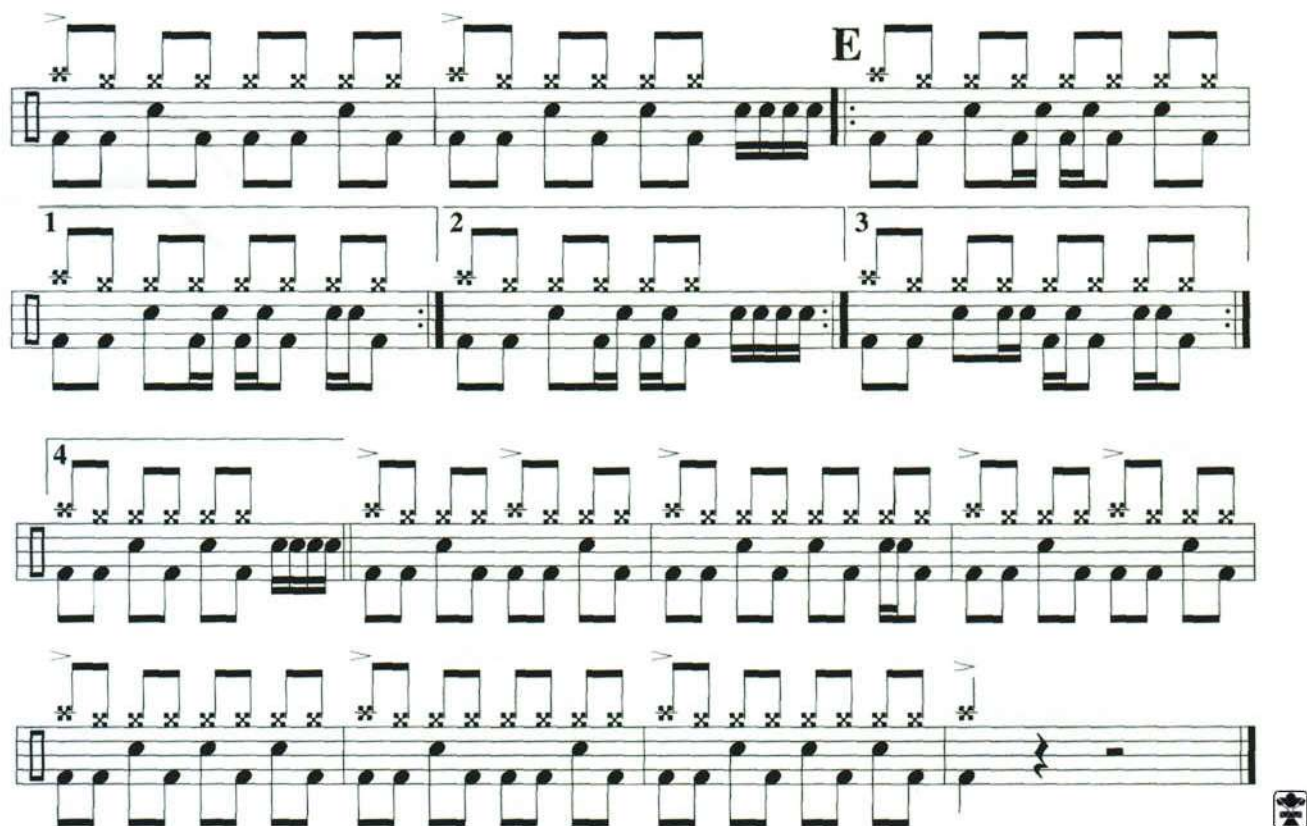
A

8

B

3 10

The page contains six systems of drum notation, each consisting of two staves. The top staff of each system typically contains a single melodic line with notes and rests, while the bottom staff contains a complex rhythmic pattern using various drum symbols (e.g., snare, tom, cymbal). The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, beams, and dynamic markings like accents (>) and breath marks (v). The systems are labeled with letters and numbers: the first system has measures labeled 1 and 2; the second system has measures labeled 3 and 1; the third system has measures labeled 2 and 3; the fourth system is labeled 'C' and ends with two measures marked with a double bar line and a slash; the fifth system is labeled 'D' and includes a measure with a long note marked '8'; the sixth system is labeled '8' and ends with a measure marked with a double bar line and a slash.



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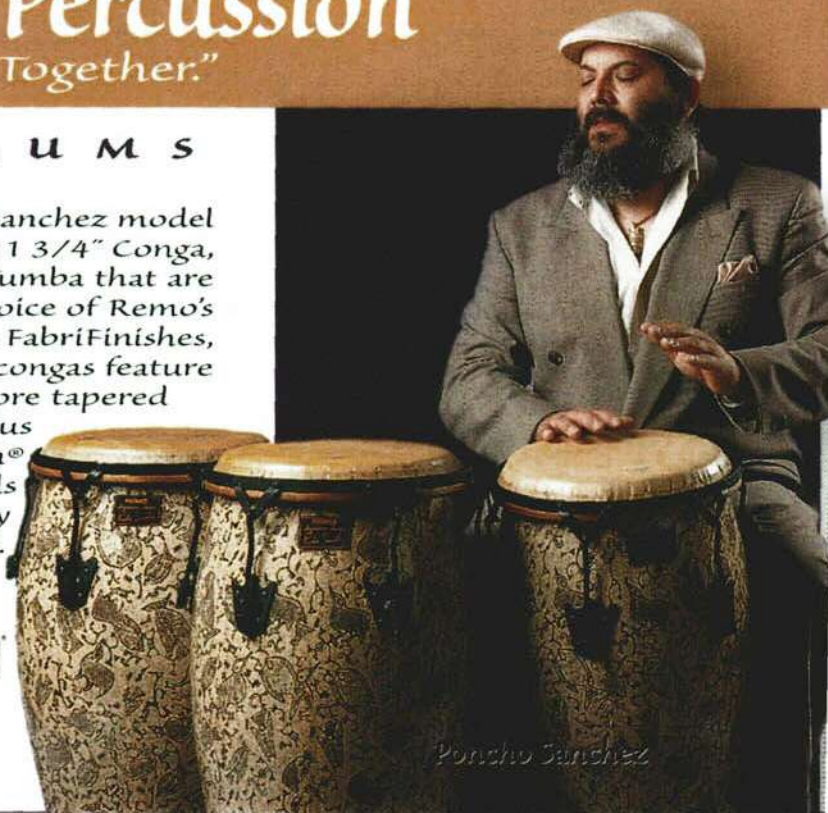


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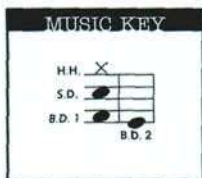
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Double Strokes For Double Bass

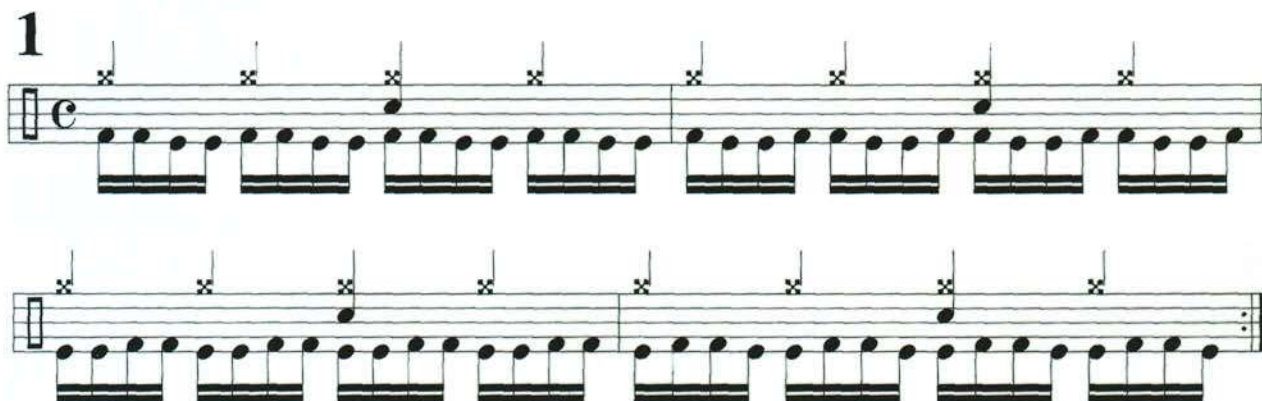
by Virgil Donati



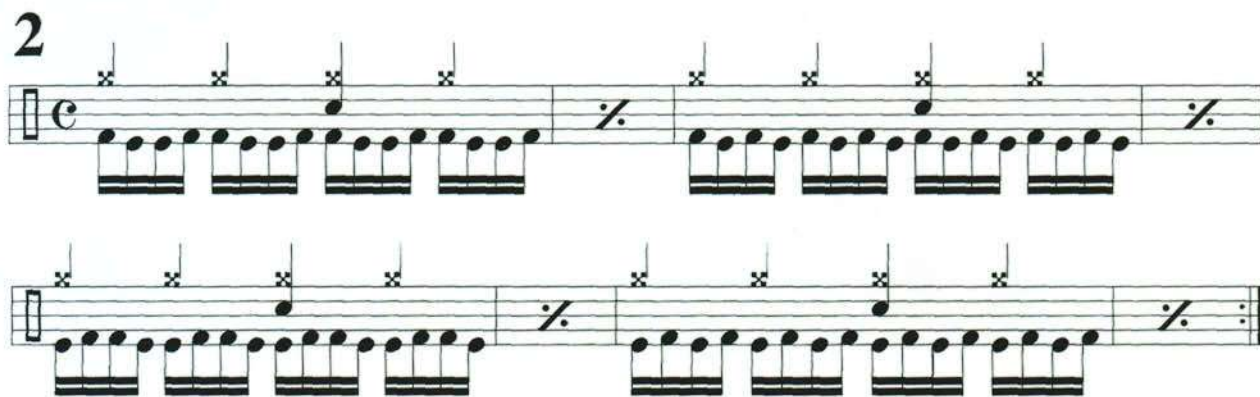
Editor's note: Anyone who has seen Virgil Donati perform can attest to his outstanding technique. Some would even say that he has some of the best chops on the planet. Several areas of his playing are strong, but one area Virgil is exceptional at is his double

bass work. He may be the first to successfully utilize double strokes on double bass. (He wowed the audience with his foot work at the *Modern Drummer* Drum Festival this past May.) With that in mind, we asked Virgil to give us a few examples of the things he has practiced to develop his doubles on double bass. Yes, these exercises look difficult, but they *are* possible!

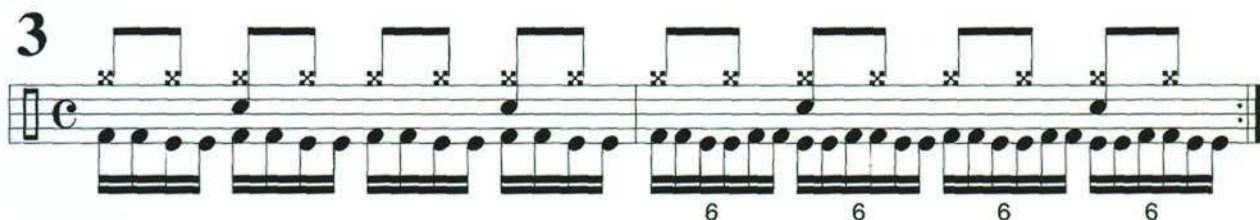
Transition From Double Strokes To Inverted Double Strokes:



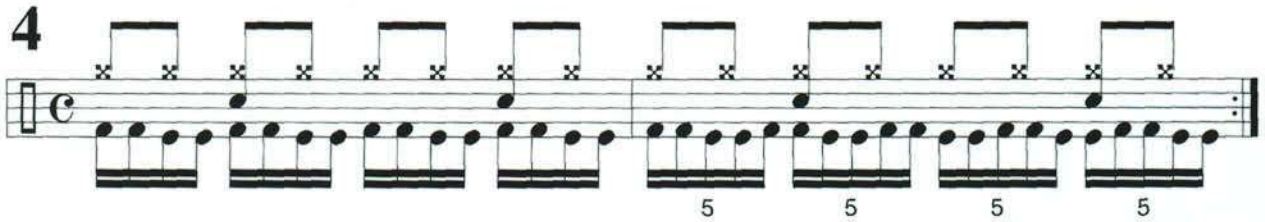
Transition From Inverted Double Strokes To Single Strokes:



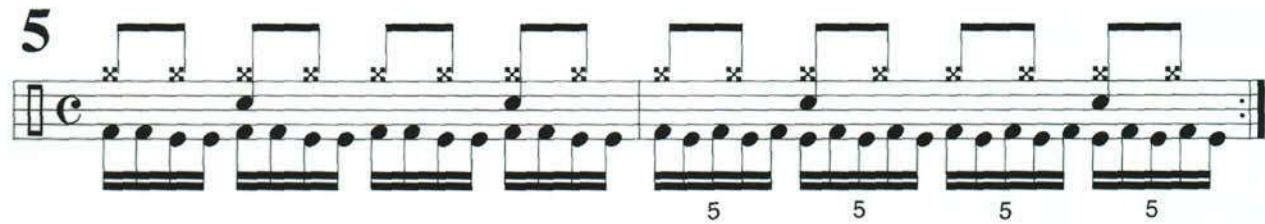
Double Strokes To 16th-Note-Triplet Double Strokes:



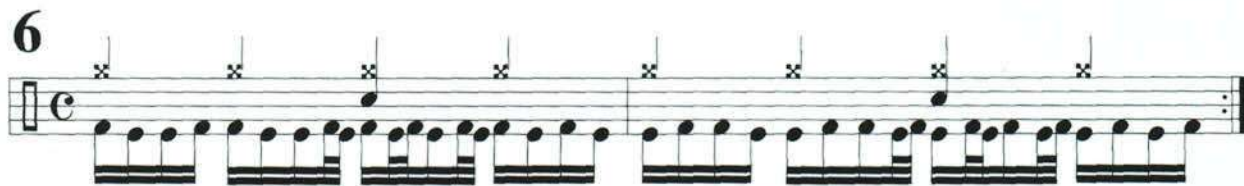
Polyrhythmic Double Strokes—Two-Against-Five Between Hi-Hat And Bass Drums In Second Bar (double-stroke quintuplets with feet):



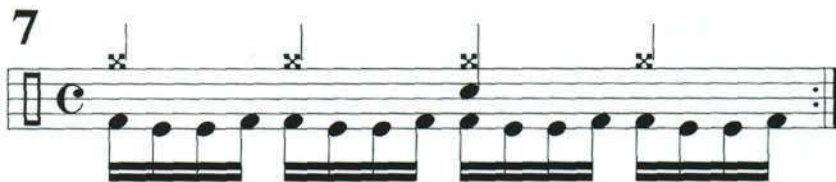
Single-Stroke Quintuplets:



Inverted Double Strokes With 32nd-Note Fill-ins:



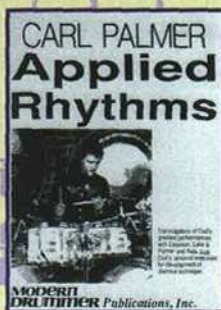
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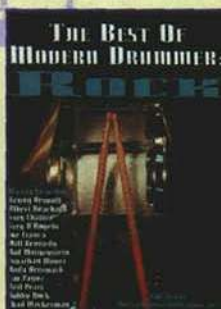
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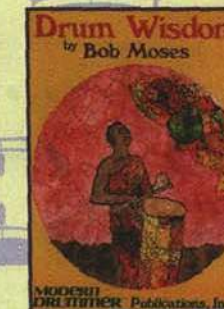
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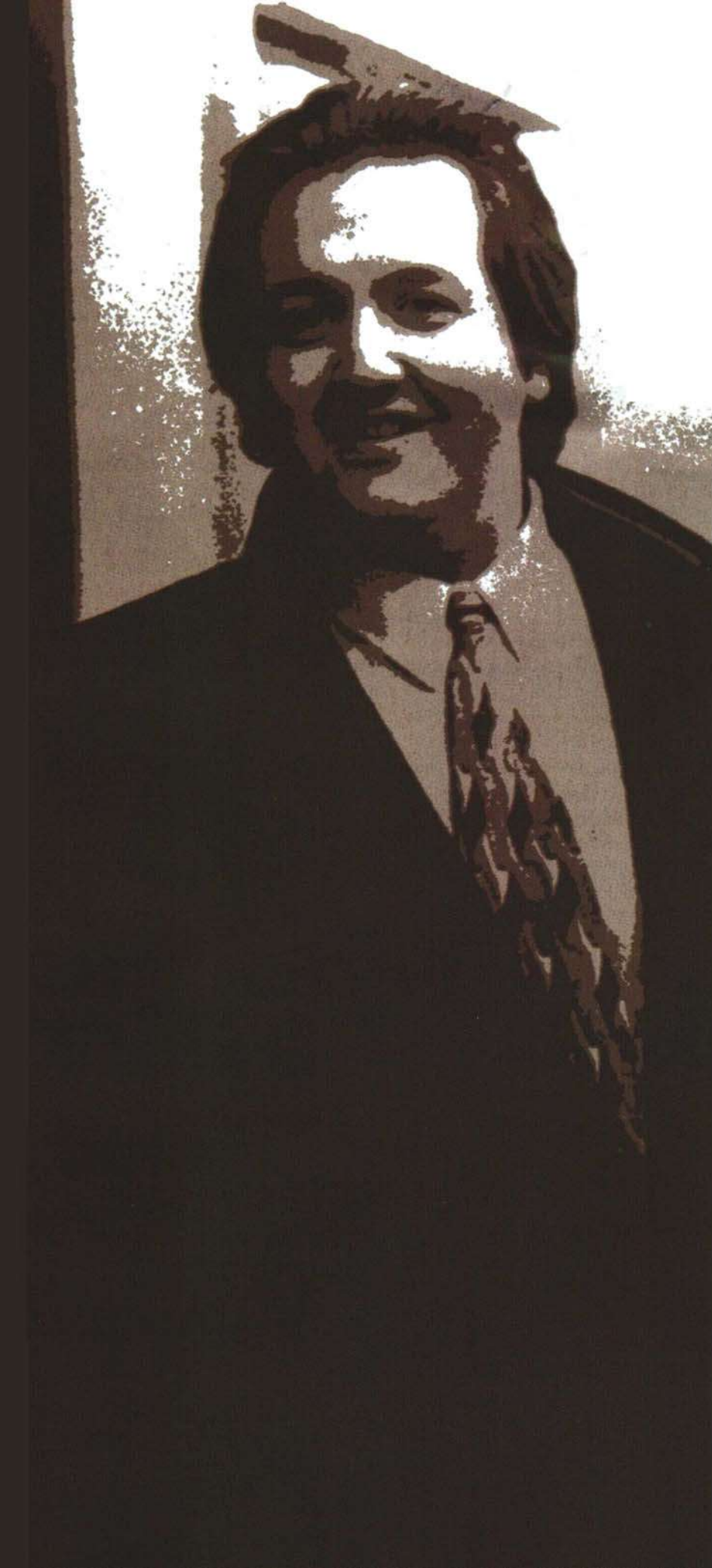
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MOD7

JOEY DeFRANCESCO

by Michael Florio

NEVER HAS THE TERM "PHENOM" BEEN MORE APROPOS THAN IN THE CASE OF TWENTY-FIVE-YEAR OLD HAMMOND B-3 ACE JOEY DeFRANCESCO. HIS SENSE OF TIME AND SWING ARE UNCANNY. SINCE RECORDING HIS DEBUT ALBUM SOON AFTER LEAVING MILES DAVIS'S BAND (AT THE TENDER AGE OF SIXTEEN), JOEY HAS HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO WORK WITH SOME OF THE GREATEST DRUMMERS OF ALL TIME. HERE ARE HIS THOUGHTS ON JUST A FEW.



Philly Joe Jones

MF: You played with Philly Joe Jones when you were only ten years old. Give us the low-down on that.

JD: When I was ten years old there was a very hot organ lounge in South Philly called Gert's Lounge, and all the cats played there. I had a gig there in a group with Philly Joe on drums and Hank Mobley on tenor saxophone. Of course, since I was only ten, I really wasn't that aware of who those cats were. Thank God, because if I had been, I probably would've choked up. To this day I remember Philly Joe really groovin' hard. In fact, I have some of that stuff on tape. Luckily, I can go back and hear what it was like. To play with him was incredible, and I was honored that I was able to do it. The way Philly Joe Jones played is my definition of what it's all about to swing on the drums.

"THE WAY PHILLY
JOE JONES PLAYED
IS MY DEFINITION
OF WHAT IT'S ALL
ABOUT TO SWING
ON THE DRUMS."

Steve Gadd

MF: You've had the opportunity to play with Steve on a number of occasions. You've also done sessions with him, and there's even talk of a new Gadd Gang project. Give us your thoughts on Steve.

JD: Steve is one of the very big pioneers of the drums. He came up with a whole new bag of laying down a groove. He lays down a backbeat like nobody else—you can play anything on top of it—and he grooves hard all the way through it. There's nobody better when it comes to that. A lot of prominent figures in drumming will tell you that Steve Gadd was their idol, and you can hear it in their playing.

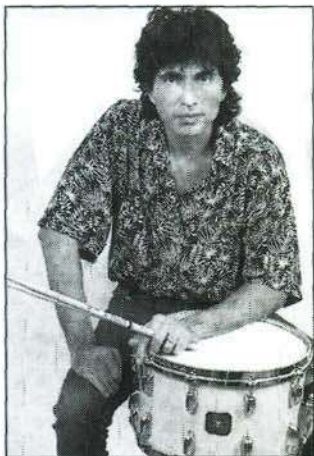
MF: We all know of Gadd's body of work in the pop, R&B, and fusion genres. Since you are a straight-ahead jazz musician, give us your thoughts on Steve's straight-ahead playing. What makes it different from the cats who call their thing straight-ahead?

JD: First of all, Steve's first influence was



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straight-ahead. At one time, he sounded just like Philly Joe. Everything he was doing—his comping, when he'd take solos and fours—it was all Philly Joe. But this was when he was fifteen and sixteen years old. The reason I know that—even though I wasn't around at that time—is because he used to play with Jack McDuff. I heard some old tapes of him, and I have seen some old videos of him playing, and I would've sworn it was Philly Joe. After the years went by, Steve started playing different things. Steve is heavy into Latin; he knows all those Latin grooves. Everything he's done up to this point has influenced his playing, so when he plays straight-ahead now, it's not as authentic. It's not like when you hear Philly Joe and that type of swing. It's different, but it still grooves. And when he shuffles, you can't beat it.

Ricky Wellman

MF: You played with Ricky Wellman in Miles Davis's band. Ricky was one of Miles' favorite drummers. What are your thoughts on Ricky?

JD: Not a lot of people are aware of Ricky, but he is a great drummer. He had a lot to do with developing the go-go beat—that street groove created in D.C. that's called hip-hop now. Miles dug that, 'cause go-go is really like a lop-sided swing. The ride is still ding-ding-ga-ding, but then you lay that funk beat underneath it, and it swings. So Ricky gave Miles a vehicle to play his own style: being able to swing, but not have it *be* swing. Then he could call it innovative.

MF: Should people check out Ricky?

JD: Definitely! Ricky's a bad cat. He can groove hard. He can't play straight-ahead, and he'll be the first to tell you that. But with what he does in his own bag...he swings. "Swing" doesn't necessarily mean "straight-ahead." A lot of people don't understand that.

Jeff "Tain" Watts

MF: Jeff Watts is perhaps the best known of the "new breed" jazz drummers you've worked with.

JD: We've done a couple of gigs together over the years. Jeff is one of the finest jazz drummers on the scene today. He's got all the influences—Philly Joe, Elvin Jones—but he takes all that stuff and really makes it his own. He's got a lot of fire.

MF: When you play with Jeff, do you find yourself hearing the influences and saying, "Oh, yeah...that's Elvin...that's Philly Joe..."?

JD: I know where it comes from. Anybody who really knows about jazz knows where it comes from. But Jeff grooves hard, and he can play *any* bag. He can play funk and sound like Steve Gadd on the backbeat. People don't know that about him. It's very difficult to play all that stuff and make it sound good. You know, he played with George Benson a couple of years ago, and they weren't playing straight-ahead.

Dennis Chambers

MF: You've been playing with Dennis as a member of John McLaughlin's Free Spirits. You recorded an album with that unit last year, *Live In Tokyo*.

JD: Dennis is a good friend, and we have a great time together. What can you say about the cat? The way he plays is inhuman. Drummers from all over the place come to see him—straight-ahead drummers...any kind of drummers. They sit there and drool watching him, because he's just incredible on the drums. He's in that Buddy Rich caliber of impressing somebody with technique and how many different bags he can play. He's simply one of the great drummers of our time.

MF: We're all familiar with Dennis's playing with P-Funk, Steely Dan, Scofield, etc. Let's address his straight-ahead playing in the Free Spirits.

JD: There are a lot of different ways to look at that. Number one, playing with John McLaughlin may involve what you'd call a straight-ahead beat, but it's not really straight-ahead music; it's not authentic swing. What we're doing with the Free Spirits is more a jazz-fusion swing. Dennis has Jack DeJohnette influences, Elvin Jones influences, and Tony Williams influences, but his biggest influence is Billy Cobham. He uses a big set, tuned a certain way; it's more of a funk set. But Dennis knows how to play straight-ahead. I've heard him a couple of times on a small kit tuned for playing jazz, and he sounded very authentic.

Elvin Jones

MF: Same band, the Free Spirits...different drummer, Elvin Jones. You're twenty-five now, so unlike when you played with

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Philly Joe Jones at ten, Elvin's place in jazz and drum history is clearly evident to you. What is it like playing with this living legend? I guess "authenticity" would be an understatement?

JD: Well, Elvin was on records with the organ players. He did some stuff with Larry Young in the '60s. So I was aware of Elvin, and I always dug him. Later, when I got into Trane, I became an even bigger Elvin Jones fan. When I sit down and play the drums, that's how I try to play. As far as styles go, he's one of my all-time faves. So when I'm playing with him and he's there smilin', we're just having a great time—and the music is spiritual, man. You feel that. The first time we played together—and pretty much every time after that—I needed a diaper.

MF: Compare Elvin Jones to Dennis Chambers in the Free Spirits.

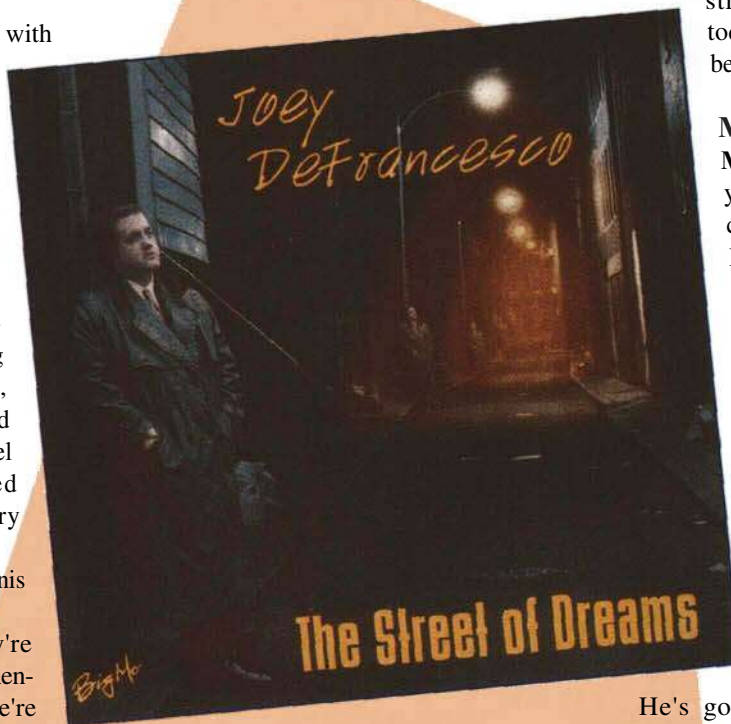
JD: I won't compare them...they're incomparable. But as far as "authenticity" goes, you're damn right. We're playing the tunes of John Coltrane, and Elvin's just layin' it down the way it's supposed to be done.

MF: When you're playing with Elvin, do you listen as a bandmember or as a fan?

JD: Oh, as a fan, all the time. In fact, I have the drums so loud in my monitor that McLaughlin can't walk near it. I don't want to miss anything.

Byron Landham

MF: Byron Landham has been your drummer for the past nine years or so. You've watched him develop.



What are your thoughts on Byron?

JD: I've known Byron for more than half my life. He's developed beautifully from the time he started playing. He's a natural, and he plays that stuff like he's been playin' it forever. Because his older brother, Rob, was a jazz musician, he knew what to check out. He's twenty-six years old,

and right now, of all the young drummers, he is the best. That doesn't compare him with Elvin or Tony. Those cats are legends; they're in their own category. Of the new straight-ahead drummers of today, Byron Landham is the best.

Mickey Roker

MF: About four years ago, you took me to a small jazz club in Philly called Ortlieb's. I couldn't believe what I was hearing. An older cat, maybe sixty or so, was swingin' hard, playing tempos so intense that I had to leave the club for air. That was Mickey Roker.

JD: When you talk about swingin' and groovin', you've got Mickey Roker. He's got all those different straight-ahead bags down. Want to play some hard-core bop, Coltrane-style?

He's got that down. He's an all-around, straight-ahead jazz drummer. There are different styles of jazz drumming, but Mickey swings hard, man. He's clean, he's crisp and precise, and he's beautiful. He's in the legend category.

Idris Muhammad

MF: You've had the opportunity to work with Idris Muhammad. One of his great

kenny aronoff, pat mastellato, joel rosenblatt...
...three players to keep your eyes on...

...not only for their amazing technique and musicality, but also for their strong dedication and discipline. Part of that discipline involves a steady practice regimen with Tama's RW100 Rhythm Watch, the first metronome designed for drummers. The RW100 memorizes up to twenty different beat and tempo patterns, allows faster tempo selection than standard electronic metronomes and provides footswitchable program advancing. The Rhythm Watch also features headphone monitoring and can be mounted on Tama cymbal stands or the optional L2RJ attachment arm for easy placement anywhere on your drum set.



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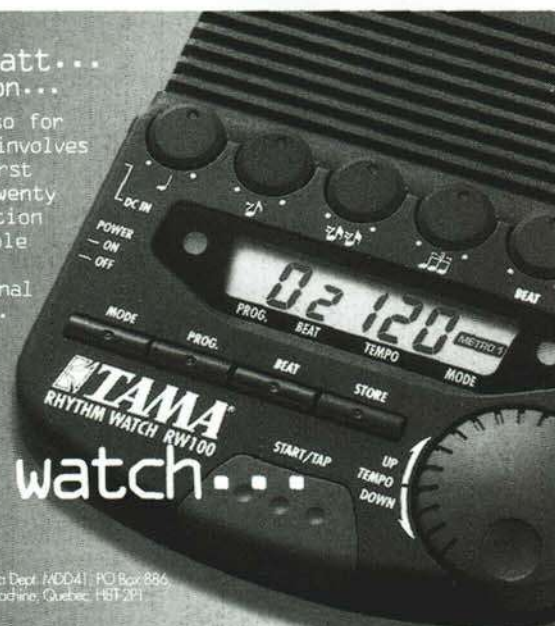


joel rosenblatt

the ones to watch...



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attributes is his feel.

JD: That cat is *all* feel. He just lays it down. I've been diggin' Idris forever, and here's why: My first influence was Fats Domino's "Blueberry Hill." Well, that's Idris playing. And on "Girl Can't Help It" by Little Richard, that's him layin' it down. At that time he was known as Leo Morris. Most people aren't aware that he pioneered a lot of New Orleans funk, like "Alligator Boogaloo." Cats like Zigaboo Modeliste and the Meters picked up on that. Idris is the man. In the dictionary, it should say, Feel: Idris Muhammad.

Dave Cook

MF: You were able to work with Dave Cook on some recent dates while Byron Landham was out with Betty Carter. Although he's originally from Pittsburgh, he's a legend in the Phoenix area. Let's talk about one of the best-kept secrets of the Southwest.

JD: Dave Cook is one of the cats from the Philly Joe/Jimmy Cobb era. He has the vibe, and when you're playing with him you feel like you're playing with all those cats. He's one of the grooving-est players

you'll ever hear. The feel is incredible; he's something else. You know, he taught Lewis Nash. He's one of my favorite drummers.

MF: You know, Joey, you absolutely kill that B-3, and lately you're killing the trumpet. But not many people know that you also mess with the drums. If you start shedding, cats are going to start getting nervous.

JD: Nah. I keep a kit, and every once in a while I like to play. I love the drums. Look at what we're doing now: We're talking about drummers. When I go to hear music, I want to sit right in front of the drummer because, really, it's one of my favorite instruments. When I play 'em, I can swing, man; that's in me. My father put that in the sauce. I don't have any technique; when I try to run something, it's like a train wreck. But sometimes, that's happenin', too. [laughs] If I ever get some technique together, you know, I might be able to play something.

MF: So maybe we'll hear you on record?

JD: [laughing] You *might* hear me on record.



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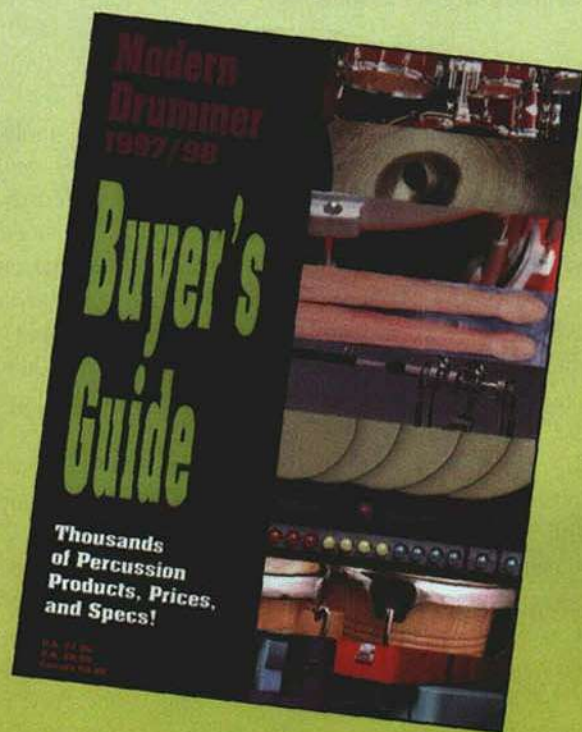
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The Drummer As Recording Artist

Part 4: The Recording Process

by Hal Howland

In the previous three installments of this series, we looked at sales & promotion, business issues pertaining to your recording project, and CD production. As we approach the creative impetus of the whole project—the recording itself—we should arm ourselves with a few...



Technical Basics

Today we are surrounded by such sophisticated technology that we tend to forget it has always been this way. The four- and eight-track tape machines on which the Beatles recorded the most important pop records in history were as highly advanced in the '60s as our digital miracle-workers are this week. The critically preferred recording of Puccini's opera *La Boheme* was made in 1956. Some of the world's greatest jazz records were made during the same period in Rudy Van Gelder's living room. If you know in your heart that you cannot make a record that will stand up in that company, do not waste your savings.

High technology is here to stay, of course, and we who play acoustic instruments need a basic understanding of it to communicate with studio personnel and to work successfully in the studio environment.

The specifications for rating equipment include frequency response, distortion, signal-to-noise ratio, and dynamic range. The frequency or pitch of a sound wave is the number of cycles per second, measured in Hertz (Hz); one Hz equals one cycle per second. The human ear can detect notes as low as about 20 Hz and as high as about 20,000 Hz. A piece of equipment with a relatively flat frequency response curve will respond evenly and accurately to sounds across its entire range. Distortion occurs when the equipment itself produces audio signals in addition to the input signals, and is measured as a percentage (e.g., .08% total harmonic distortion). Intensity or loudness is measured in decibels (dB). The signal-to-noise ratio is the ratio of the input signal to the equipment's own background noise (e.g., 45 dB). Dynamic range is the ratio between the softest and the loudest sounds a given medium will reproduce. An equipment manufacturer strives for a wide frequency response with a flat curve, low distortion, a wide dynamic range, and a high signal-to-noise ratio.

Sound is captured with microphones, pickups, transducers, direct boxes, and tone generators. There are three basic types of good microphones: dynamic, ribbon, and condenser. In a dynamic mic', the sound wave strikes a diaphragm that generates vibrations in a coil suspended in a magnetic field; in a ribbon mic', the sound

strikes a thin metal ribbon suspended between magnetic poles; and in a condenser mic', the sound strikes the first of two metal plates separated by an electrical charge. Engineers generally use dynamic mic's for instruments and voices, ribbon mic's for voices, and condenser mic's for instruments. Some mic's are more directional than others, that is, canceling sound coming from beside or behind the grille. A microphone's impedance, measured in ohms, must match the gear to which it is connected; a low-impedance mic' (50-600 ohms) will not lose sound quality when used with a cord more than twenty-five feet long, as will a high-impedance mic' (20,000-50,000 ohms). A pickup or transducer is attached directly to an instrument and converts vibrations to an electrical signal. A direct box is used to bypass an amplifier and plug an instrument directly into the mixing console. Examples of tone generators include synthesizers, samplers, and drum machines.

Sound is stored on magnetic tape, in the digital format, in tone generators, and on computer disk. The last three formats offer great editing flexibility and the absence of tape noise; but the best tape recorders offer excellent noise reduction and, to many ears, a warmer sound.

MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) is a control system that enables you to synchronize electronic instruments, effects, tape decks, and other gear for orchestration.

In most recording formats, your signals go first to a mixer, where they will be combined and manipulated before reaching the tape recorder. A mixer features low-level inputs for microphones, high-level (line) inputs for instruments and other direct sources, attenuation, volume controls, equalization (tone controls), cue sends to mix signals to headphones or monitor speakers, talkback switches for interstudio communication, pan pots for positioning of signals between left and right channels, solo switches for listening to any track without the others, and VU meters or LEDs for visual monitoring of the signal. Today's automated consoles allow truly amazing possibilities.

Signal processing devices include noise reduction, analog-to-digital conversion, equalization (EQ), filters, compressors, limiters, expanders, reverb, echo, digital delays, phase shifters, and harmonizers. They allow you infinite ways to affect your sound. (Too often they are used also to compensate for a lack of musical content or ability.)

Studio monitor speakers provide a flat response over a wide frequency range. Listening back on these speakers will be flattering (or devastating, depending on your performance). A good engineer will also monitor your recording on "near-field" monitors, small speakers such as those found in a car or a portable stereo.

There is an abundance of semiprofessional gear available. Own

this gear if you can, use it to make demos and to practice your studio techniques, but do not use it to record your album.

Studio Strategy

It is important that you find a studio in which you and your group will feel comfortable. Cranky musicians do not generally record memorable albums. Make appointments to visit several good studios and ask yourself some questions: Is the load-in easy or difficult? Is there room for everyone and all our gear? Are the decor and lighting conducive to performance? Are the ventilation, temperature, and humidity good for us and our instruments? Will we and our engineer work free of distractions, or are there unwelcome visitors milling about? Is the engineer confident and easygoing? Is the rest of the staff friendly? Is there food nearby, and a lounge in which to relax? (The better studios are luxurious workplaces, with tasteful art, plants and scenery, catering, even saunas and Jacuzzis.) Can we book block time during the hours in which we work best? Can we book a studio lock-out, ensuring that no other client or engineer will disturb our setup and adjustments? Can we leave our gear overnight? Who else has recorded here recently, and, most important, how do their recordings sound?

The biggest mistake inexperienced recording artists make is entering the studio musically unprepared. They read tales of pampered rock stars composing and arranging on expensive studio time, of wondrous artistic heights achieved more or less by chance. As a new artist you cannot afford to operate this way. Until you have logged many hours in the studio, no amount of rehearsal will be too much. (The studio environment will produce

quite enough surprises.) On this topic, here is another excerpt from my book, *The Human Drummer*.

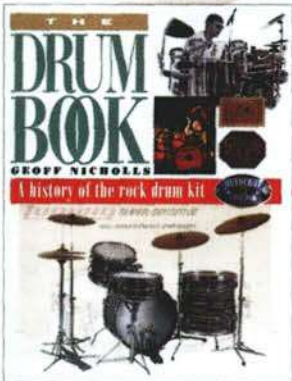
"When rehearsing your own group and playing your own compositions, you must balance your perfectionism and first-hand knowledge of the material with your players' tolerances. Give them the information they need, but don't burden them with excessive details or choices. Your printed parts and demo tapes should so clearly articulate your intentions that you can spend your time playing instead of apologizing. If your music includes improvisation, keep your arrangements open to change. On the other hand, you have every right to expect that parts be played correctly. If a piece or a section is through-composed and isn't open to discussion, your players should respect your wishes. (If you write a pure D-major triad and your bored keyboardist insists on turning it into *Tristan und Isolde*, don't hesitate to bring the harmony back down to earth.) And you needn't feel guilty about allowing more solo space to your better players. Your audience deserves a good performance, not a master class. If someone isn't cutting the gig, find someone else. Real friends will understand."

The recording process involves several stages, including preparing the equipment, setup, testing, recording, playback, mixing, and mastering. Your actual performance may occupy the smallest portion of the time spent in the studio, but you will learn to hear and evaluate music in a whole new way.

Preparing the recording equipment is the responsibility of the engineer and his or her assistants. Since it is foolish to try to make a commercial recording while simultaneously playing and engineering, leave that task in the proper hands.

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Drumset Prep

Of course you are responsible for preparing your own gear for the studio. Here is more from *The Human Drummer*:

"If you know you're going to use your own drums, it's important to get them studio-ready beforehand. Put a new batter head on every drum, with the possible exception of the bass drum, if that head isn't very old. Your bottom heads should be unplayed and relatively new; if they're not, change them.... [Be] sure each head is in tune with itself....

"Check all your stands, holders, and accessories for buzzes, rattles, squeaks, and other unwanted sounds that might not be noticed on stage but that might be brilliantly preserved in the studio. Make sure the insulators are on your cymbal stands. If the metal cup washer under the felt washer rattles, install an insulator made of stiff nylon or plastic rather than rubber, and screw it down so it holds the cup washer still. (Don't restrict the movement of the cymbal itself.) Most other noises, such as cymbal-stand tubes rattling inside one another, can be eradicated with a bit of foam or tape (though the latter can be messy)....

"Be careful not to over-muffle the snare drum. What may sound pleasantly 'compact' by itself may sound dull and boxy when other instruments are mixed in. I find that engineers today are willing or even eager to record the drums (including the bass drum) wide open, completely unmuffled."

In Part 5 we'll wrap up the recording process and move on to mixing, mastering, and manufacturing.



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Roger Cohen

Clifton, New Jersey's Roger Cohen is a multi-faceted drummer/percussionist. Trained in percussion at Indiana University of Pennsylvania and at S.U.N.Y. Purchase, Roger developed diverse musical skills and tastes. As a result, his current activities range from playing orchestral percussion and musical theater to co-leading a jazz quartet called F. Melisch and recording a CD with a heavy/alternative rock band called Fuel. Along the way Roger performed in a clinic/concert group called Broccoli Trauma, demonstrating MIDI technology within a jazz context. In that group Roger combined acoustic drums with triggers, electronic pads, and a keyboard. "I would comp chords with my left hand while I continued to play time with my right hand and my feet," says Roger. "It was wonderful for developing independence."



Roger's playing on the Fuel CD reveals an admirable combination of power, musical creativity, and restraint. A videotaped drum solo gives evidence of his technical abilities and compositional skills—while tipping a musical hat to Roger's major influences: Max Roach, John Bonham, Art Blakey, and Neil Peart. He performs on a Gretsch drumkit with Zildjian cymbals, which he augments with "an old Ludwig snare, a Pearl piccolo (played with the snares off), three cowbells, a *Jam Block*, an *Icebell*, a tambourine, a couple of 'perfectly cracked' cymbals mounted on top of each other, and a finger cymbal suspended from a shoestring."

Aside from F. Melisch and Fuel, Roger keeps busy with freelance work and private teaching. But regardless of the project, he says that his biggest challenge is "always to find creative ways to infuse my personality and influences into the music, while still maintaining the integrity of the genre."

If you'd like to appear in *On The Move*, send us an audio or video cassette of your best work (preferably both solo and with a band) on three or four songs, along with a brief bio sketch and a high-quality color or black & white close-up photo. (Polaroids are not acceptable. Photos will not be paid for nor credited.) The bio sketch

Denny Kubas

Denny "Koobee" Kubas of Grand Island, New York has been a drummer for thirteen years. In that time he has made a name for himself in western New York as a club and recording drummer for many groups, including Malevolent Creation and Carfax Abbey. Although he describes himself as a "progressive rock" drummer with influences like Rod Morgenstein and Neil Peart, Denny also cites Ringo Starr as a major influence. As such, his playing style combines the power and "busy-ness" of the progressive style with the solid time, musical taste, and simplicity exemplified by Ringo. He tends to "spice up" his live playing with comic showmanship and an "off the wall attitude." He does his playing on a variety of Ludwig drums (including a



vintage 1968 "Ringo" kit) and Zildjian cymbals, and he is an endorser of Regal Tip drumsticks.

Besides his skill as a drummer, Denny also knows the value of promotion. Not content to remain a perennial siderhan, he has chosen to take matters into his own hands. For example, calling on his additional skills as a singer,

songwriter, and multi-instrumentalist, Denny has created and released a solo CD called *Multiple Personalities*. He has also composed and recorded a specialty song called "Playing Like Ringo," which has received positive critical and label

response. Denny has even established a "Koobee" Web site (www.promo-web.com/koobee). According to Denny: "My goal is simple: to get a recording contract so my music can get out to the world."

Chris Boylan

Thirty-year-old Chris Boylan from New York City has been playing since the age of seven. With "drum heroes" that include John Bonham and Neil Peart, it's not surprising that Chris describes his musical style as "rock 'n' roll, with a somewhat frantic and energetic performance style that has earned me the nickname of 'Animal.'" But Chris also cites Max Roach as a major influence who has provided him with an awareness of musicality and a sense of composition.

These playing attributes serve Chris well in his gig with Static 13, a dynamic group that combines elements of grunge, thrash, alternative, and progressive

rock to come up with a sound and style all their own. Chris's playing on Static 13's self-produced CD *eye won't fool i* (along with a live-performance video demo) displays his grasp of odd time signatures, his ability to groove in a high-power format, and his sheer explosive drive. The CD is getting solid airplay on college radio in the Northeast, while the band is making a lot of noise (figuratively and literally) in the New York club scene.

"Our goal is to attract the attention of a major label in order to get our music out to a wider audience," says Chris. "But in the mean-



time we're having fun." Chris has fun on a Pearl *Export* kit with Zildjian and Paiste cymbals, a DW *5000CX* single pedal, and a Premier *2001* chrome snare—along with a variety of LP congas and percussion.

should include your full name and age, along with your playing style(s), influences, current playing situation (band, recording project, freelance artist, etc.), how often and where you are playing, and what your goals are (recording artist, session player, local career player, etc.). Include any special items of interest pertaining to what

you do and how you do it, and a list of the equipment you use regularly. Send your material to *On The Move*, Modern Drummer Publications, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. Material **cannot** be returned, so please **do not** send original tapes or photos.



Send quick, proven tips that have saved you time, money, or effort to *Drumline*, c/o *Modern Drummer*, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. Items can range from equipment maintenance, repair, or design tips to practice and playing ideas. Please keep tips to 150 words or less, and be sure to include your name and address. We'll send you an MD6-Panel Cap if we publish your tip.

Saving Your Skin

Being a drummer can have miserable side-effects on the skin on your hands—especially during winter months. During years of gigging in New England, my hands have suffered many brutal splits and cracks, both on the palms and on the knuckles. When drumming becomes less of a hobby and more of a lifestyle, hand creams just don't seem to cut it anymore.

The solution is a salve marketed under various names (including simply "Salve," along with "Bag Balm" and "Udder Balm") used in combination with gloves. Before beginning a session or gig, cover your hands with the salve and throw on a pair of drum or sports gloves. The salve will be thick and greasy on your skin under the gloves. But when the session or gig is over and you remove the gloves, the salve will have soaked into the skin of your hands, leaving it replenished with moisture. The product is available in most drug stores (and some animal-supply stores).

Sam Jodrey
Newtonville, MA

Organized Practice

As an organizational tool for practice sessions, I suggest a bulletin board placed next to your music stand. On the board, place a list of rudiments, lists of songs you might need to learn, charts of your favorite grooves, new ideas—anything that you might find helpful in developing your playing. Having these reminders right in front of you eliminates the "out of sight, out of mind" problem that can sometimes occur when you sit down to practice. The result can be an increase in the amount of time you want to practice, and an improvement in the quality of that practicing.

Justin Gallo
St. James, NY

Re-Tipping Brushes

Most of my work with groups calls for the use of brushes. I prefer a non-retractable brush with a rubber-covered handle. But with lots of usage the rubber covering on the handles begins to stretch—sometimes extending over half an inch beyond the butt ends of the handles. Rather than replace the brushes, I cut approximately one inch of rubber off the end. Then I "cap" the end of the brush handle with the rubber tips used on the legs of floor toms, securing them with a little *Super Glue*. The handles beneath the rubber covering are 3/8" in diameter (like the floor-tom legs), so the rubber tips work great. They also improve grip and control of the brushes.

Scott St. Peter
Hubbell, MI

Hot Holes

Anyone who has ever attempted to cut a hole in their front bass-drum head knows that the results can be disastrous. One slip of the razor knife and you have an ugly gash in your brand-new head. To avoid this dilemma, heat the open end of an empty coffee can (small or large, depending on the size of hole you want) on an electric stove burner set at medium heat. After about a minute, remove the can from the burner with an oven mitt. With the bass drum head at a medium to tight tension, place the edge of the can on the head and allow it to melt its way through—leaving a clean-cut hole.

In some cases the entire circumference of the can edge won't burn through the head. However, an impression will have melted into the head. When the head cools, take a small pair of scissors and cut around this groove. The impression will serve as a template. *Please note:* Young drummers out there should check with their parents before attempting this procedure.

Tom Kelsey
San Diego, CA

Non-Slip Hi-Hat Rods

The exposed portion of a hi-hat rod (above the top cymbal) is a great place to mount

tambourines, small bells, and other percussion gadgets. However, the action of playing on these devices, coupled with the constant up-and-down motion of the hi-hat itself, can cause the tambourine or bell mounts to loosen—allowing the items to slip.

The solution is to create a small, flat, indented area on the rod, at the point where the item attaches. This can be done with a standard bench grinder or a portable electric drill fitted with a grinding wheel attachment. The "flatted" area will allow more contact by the screw in the mounting clamp of the tambourine or bell, and the indentation will help keep the item from slipping even if the clamp does come loose.

Ernie Schmid
Wilkes Barre, PA

Space-Saving On The Road



I have a space-saving tip for those (like me) who do a lot of work "on the road." I do my practicing on a *RealFeel* practice pad held by a pro-style snare-drum stand. The pad setup also supports my portable ironing board (for keeping my clothes looking decent). This arrangement, in turn, serves as a table for enjoying my *Cup-O-Soup* and coffee, and for writing postcards home. Space is always limited in hotel rooms (especially if you have to share one), so it's nice to have a multi-purpose piece of equipment like this. (Just don't forget to use the practice pad for its intended purpose!)

Steven Gomes
Ft. Myers, FL

Get A Grip

I've seen drummers who have problems holding on to their sticks employ every-

thing from tape on their fingers and sticks to wearing drumming gloves. But "drumstick tape" runs about \$6 a package, and drum gloves cost even more. Over the years that I've been playing, I've solved my "grip problem" by the use of a rosin bag—the same as that used by golfers, tennis players, and baseball players. (Playing drums is as physically demanding as any sport, after all.) The rosin—a sticky powder—provides an excellent grip, yet washes off easily with soap and water. Better yet, a bag only costs around \$1.50, and lasts for about a year!

Mark Sanders
Akron, OH

Note: The tips presented in Drumline are suggestions based on the personal experience of individual drummers, and are not necessarily endorsed or recommended by Modern Drummer magazine. Modern Drummer cannot guarantee that any problem will be solved by any Drumline suggestion, and cannot be responsible for any damage to equipment or personal injury resulting from the utilization of any such suggestion. Readers are encouraged to consider each suggestion carefully before attempting to utilize any Drumline tip.



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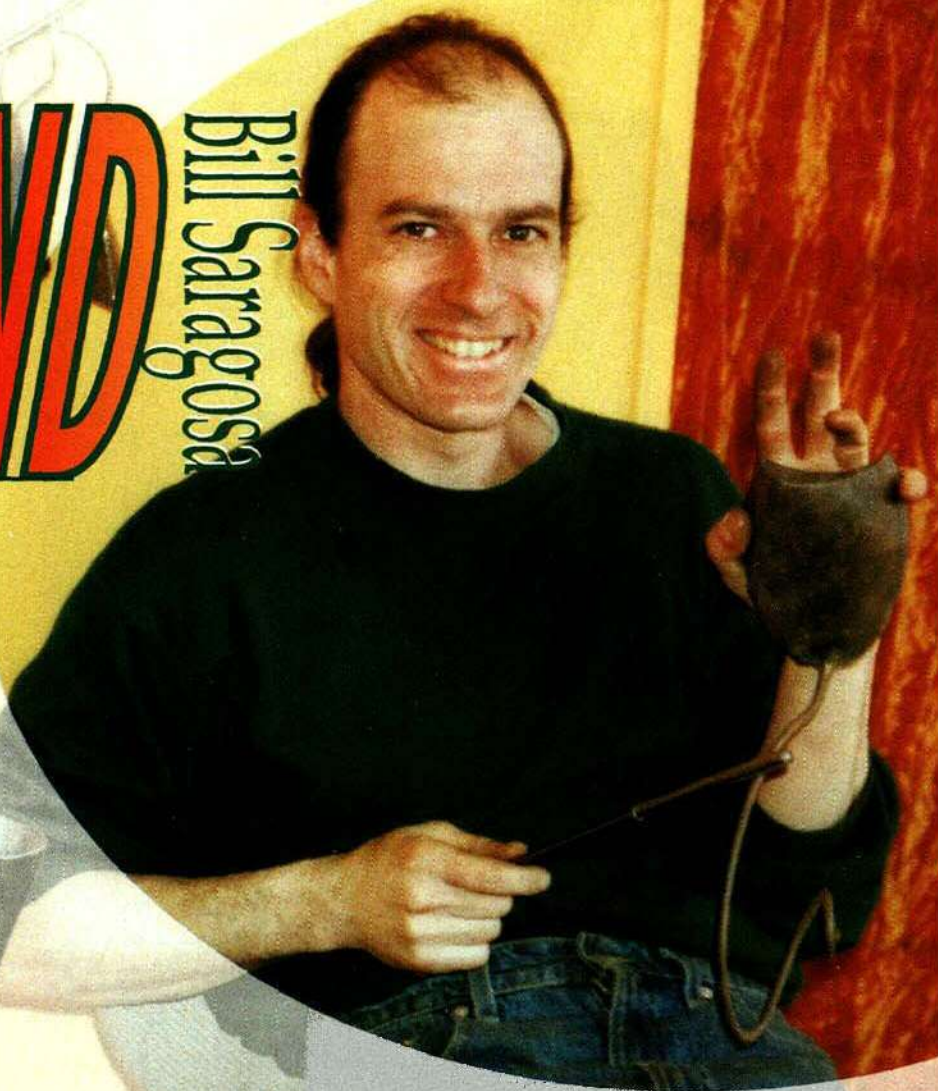
sculptor of **SOUND** Bill Saragosa

by William F. Miller

AN ARTISTIC FELLOW
WHO LIVES IN A SHOP,
WORKS WITH METAL PIECES—
CLINK, CLANK, CLONK.

TREBLE-KLAK, JABIROO,
DOUBLE DRINK, PODS;
THE NAMES OF HIS
INSTRUMENTS ARE
TONGUE-TWISTING BOGS.

WITH A DINK, WITH A DOINK,
WITH A BASH-BOOM-WHIRL,
THE SOUNDS OF SARAGOSA
ARE SPANNING THE WORLD!



Please forgive this poor attempt at Dr. Seuss-speak, but one look at Bill Saragosa's fascinating metal creations and you can't help but think of cats in hats, foxes in socks—and Grinches.

While Saragosa's instruments may look a bit wacky or weird, the sounds they produce are captivating. In fact, the buzz (not to mention the *toink* and the *zowie*) is building: Saragosa's creations are reverberating with a number of percussionists today.

Sound Inspiration

First and foremost, Bill Saragosa is a trained and talented sculptor. Originally from Mystic, Connecticut, his passion for art led him to New York City, where he studied fine art and sculpture at the Cooper Union. It seems metal was his calling. "Working with metal is very rewarding for me—very immediate," the artist urges, sitting in the front room of his workshop, a converted machine shop in the woods of a small, upstate New York hamlet.

But "conventional" sculpture wasn't for Saragosa. He explains: "I've always been interested in the 'soul' of a piece of art, and to be frank I began to feel a bit frustrated with sculpture after I got

out of school. So much of what I was seeing in the art world was essentially just a lot of big, dumb shapes—hulking and soulless. I wanted my work to have heart and to be able to communicate."

In an effort to find the "soul" in his work, Saragosa went searching for sources of inspiration. He found music, at first in the form of dance. "I was on an extended trip in New Mexico, out in the desert," he explains, "and when I was in Santa Fe I heard about an African dance class. I gave it a try, and even though I felt a bit awkward at first, I started to enjoy it. Actually, I had a blast!"

The dance classes were accompanied by drumming, and although Bill had never done it before, the power of the rhythms sparked his imagination: "It dawned on me that what I really wanted to be doing at that point was playing drums." So Bill got his hands on a djembe and practiced it until, as he puts it, "People could bear to listen to me play."

But how did this newfound interest in hand drumming lead, Saragosa to sculpting percussion instruments? "When I got back home [to New York] I started playing my drum at different community rituals," he says. "And then one fine day there was a ritual where we were all sitting in a big circle and talking about what we

wanted for our community. It came to me that I wanted music in this community—music that communicates, music that heals, music that makes us all thrive.

"The very next day, with this idea of *music* pounding in my head, I picked up some pieces of metal that I had around the shop and started working, welding and hammering bits together. In rough terms what I came up with was essentially a cowbell with a tail. At first I didn't know what I had. Once the metal cooled, I started tapping on it—and these wonderful sounds came from different parts of the piece. I realized that this thing I had created was no ordinary musical instrument. It was definitely a gift, something that would change my life."

What specifically did that first piece sound like? "It offered several tones," Bill says, "but the basic sound was a cowbell effect. The bell also functioned as an echo chamber, and the tail had a chime-like sound that reverberated through the bell, so you could filter it and get a wah-wah, talking-bell effect. I originally called this piece the 'cowtail,' because of its shape. Now I call it the *Berimbanger*."

With a wellspring of sculpture talent and a new fountain of inspiration for his work, Saragosa enthusiastically set about making experimental prototypes. "A creative floodgate opened inside of me," Bill says emphatically, "and I felt a real calling to do this. I worked for a year developing different instruments, and by September of '94 I introduced my first pieces." This led to the birth of Bill's business venture, appropriately titled Epiphany Percussion.



"I REALIZED THAT THIS THING I HAD CREATED WAS NO ORDINARY MUSICAL INSTRUMENT. IT WAS DEFINITELY A GIFT, SOMETHING THAT WOULD CHANGE MY LIFE"

The Heat & The Hammer

When trying to come up with a new instrument, Saragosa *doesn't* start by thinking of a sound. "Actually, shapes come first in my way of working," Bill points out. "I'll have a rough design in mind and start working towards it." He does this by welding pieces of raw steel, heating joints, and hammering red-hot metal. This requires Bill to wear goggles, headware, and a fire-proof apron for protection.

"At that point in the creative process I don't know what I have," he admits. "I have to wait until the metal cools before I can see what the shape sounds like. And sometimes I don't know what I have

even *after* I've played the instrument. I've discarded shapes that I initially thought didn't sound good, but then went back to play them another way—maybe upside down—and found some incredible sounds."

Watching Saragosa create one of his pieces makes you realize just how tough the work is. Being an artist can be painful. "The most physically demanding part is the repeated hammering," Bill says. "The welding is a delicate dance that takes mental focus. There's a certain amount of fatigue that ensues from that type of concentration. And I have burned myself on occasion. Also, when I'm involved in making fifty or a hundred pieces, it does get a bit tiring. But when I need a break from the shop I go outside and play my drums. I'll grab a frame drum or a djembe and relax by playing for a while."



Sarago-Go Go!

Saragosa's unpredictable, thoroughly artistic methods have* yielded some amazing instruments, many of which are now available to the drumming public. There are four basic "lines" offered by his Epiphany Percussion. Bill calls the first line *Epiphany Pods*, essentially a series of metal shakers. But these are not your average, everyday shakers. They were definitely conceived by an artistic mind.

First are his *Harmony Rattles*, which are small round pods made of perforated steel that change in timbre when the player adjusts his grip position over the holes. Bill offers a variation on this design by placing a dimple in the middle of the shaker, allowing

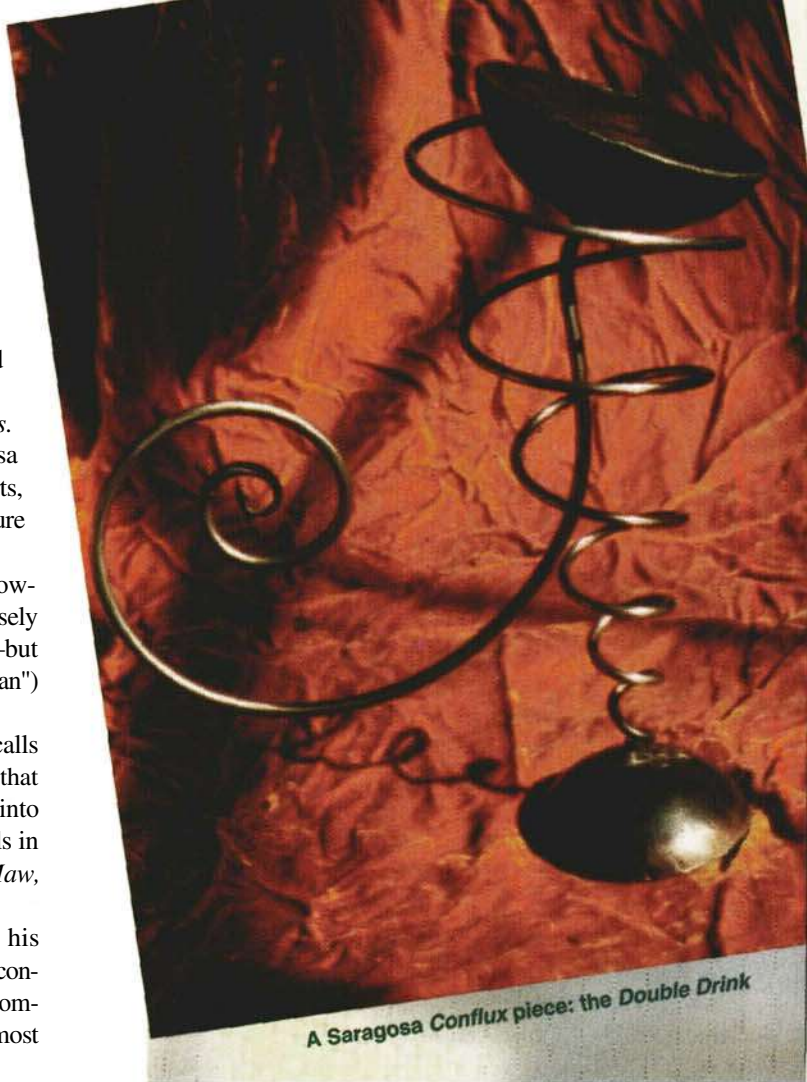
you to slightly squeeze the hemispheres together. This gives you even more control over the pitch and timbre. He calls this model the *Ciccada*. His *Clam Shell* has a similar slit design but without the perforated steel, and *Oshun's Charm* (named for the African goddess of love, beauty, and inspiration) is a brass-covered version. The *Spring Peeper* is a variable-pitch rattle (and it really works!), and his *Jabiroo Spooners* are essentially two *Spring Peepers* placed on the end of a long, thin loop.

Bill has another line of instruments he calls his *Talking Bells*. Each of these pieces features a bell design that is a Saragosa original. "No one is making these ellipsoidal bells," he asserts, "and I feel that they create the best tone. It's kind of my signature shape."

The first of these bell instruments is the *Berimbanger*, the cowbell with the curly tail mentioned earlier. The *Zarago-go* is loosely based on the classic Brazilian agogo—the two-bell design—but with a unique tail added. And the *Treble-Klak* (quite "Seussian") is a triple-bell piece featuring playing areas all over its surface.

Another product line of Bill's is even more "out there." He calls them *Compound Shakers*. These are larger pieces with shapes that are very ergonomic; they somehow seem to fall very naturally into your hands. And the sounds they produce are surprising. Models in this line include the *Cone-Maw*, the dreaded *Double Cone-Maw*, *Axial Pods*, and *Kissing Fish*.

Bill's fourth line of instruments consists of what he calls his *Conflux* pieces. He describes these water-filled creations as "containing a bit of alchemy—with water, metal, air, and fire all coming into play in their construction." To be blunt, these are the most



A Saragosa Conflux piece: the *Double Drink*

bizarre-looking of the bunch, but the sounds they produce are incredible.

Describing these instruments' appearance is a challenge: Liquid-filled, semi-circular shapes attached to all manner of twisting tails and bells—and named to match their design: *Single Spiral*, *Spiral Bell Twist*, *Double Drink*, and *Bell Helix*. Bill describes them as "an ethereal chime reverberating through the chamber, with variations in pitch achieved by manipulating the flow of liquid through the chamber. You can bow them, bang them, or strike them."

At the heart of any of Saragosa's pieces is a sense of creativity and, yes, wonderment. Their touch, feel, and look *make* you want to play them, and there are many sounds to be explored on any given piece. Saragosa was looking to create art that inspires the soul, and it's obvious that he has succeeded.

Vibrations Spreading

Several "name" musicians have been taken with the radical designs of Bill Saragosa. One of the first was King Crimson's Pat Mastelotto. Pat was so knocked out by the pieces he saw that he tracked Saragosa down and invited him to a Crimson concert. According to Bill, "I went to the show knowing very little about what or who King Crimson was. I don't follow contemporary music. I went backstage before the show and met Pat, and he introduced me to the other drummer in the band, Bill Bruford. I showed



Just how does one play a *Treble-Klak*?

them a few of my pieces, and they seemed very interested. They bought a few things on the spot, and an hour later they were playing them in the show!"

Other artists smitten with Saragosa include world-class percussionists Luis Conte, Randy Crafton, Giovanni Hidalgo, Airtio, and Glen Velez. "I'm extremely pleased that these great players are enjoying my work," Bill says, beaming. "There was a time when I knew everybody who had one of my pieces. It's expanded way beyond that now, but I still feel a real connection with the instruments because I make each one."

Saragosa is correct when he implies that his little business has grown. His instruments are not only being used by many types of musicians, but also by therapists, educators, and religious groups. (Bill mentioned that there's a shaman in South America who is using the instruments in healing ceremonies.) Saragosa's pieces have even traveled as far as Beijing, China, where they were recently used for the United Nations Women's Conference. "It never ceases to amaze me where my pieces

turn up!"

Bill appears very happy with the direction his art is taking. "It's enormously satisfying," he admits. "Yes, I'm pleased that these instruments are out in the world and inspiring people, but I'm even more excited that they are being used to help people. Several psychotherapists, music therapists, and healers are using the pieces with troubled people—in some instances really hardcore cases. I'm told the instruments have an immediate effect, calming and relaxing the patients."

"That, to me, is the most satisfying thing of all. In this world of so much pain and suffering, misunderstanding and ignorance, to create something that is real and that communicates so deeply is just profoundly rewarding."

Bill Saragosa's Epiphany Percussion instruments are distributed by Conundrum Music, 23 Waverly Place, Suite 6S, New York, NY 10003, tel: (212) 254-1133, fax: (212) 598-4064.



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RECORDINGS

Various Artists

Burning For Buddy (Volume Two) (Atlantic)

Ⓢ 1/2

drummers: Kenny Aronoff, Gregg Bissonette, Bill Bruford, Steve Gadd, David Garibaldi, Joe Morello, Neil Peart, Simon Phillips, Marvin "Smitty" Smith, Steve Smith, Dave Weckl, Buddy Rich with the Buddy Rich Big Band



All those who thought that one *Burning For Buddy* was enough, please say "Aye." The first tribute to Rich in 1994 was kind of fun, even surprisingly musical at times. But hearing pretty much the same guys do it again begs the question, "Why?" Was the plan all along to hold back some screaming stuff from the first sessions for a second release? It doesn't sound like it.

Steve Smith gives the skins an energetic whacking, and *swings* on "Moment's Notice." Marvin "Smitty" Smith wakes everybody up with some jumpin' brushwork before kicking the Rich band's ass on "Standing Up In A Hammock." And Simon Phillips provides an interesting fluidity in his raucous (rock-ish) turn at the helm. But

Steve Gadd's track is unconvincing, and Kenny Aronoff sounds stiff and not real interested. David Garibaldi seems more intent on staying out of the way of the band than pushing it hard, and Bruford proves that big band is not his forte, with a junior college-ish, wimpy "Willowcrest." (The band does not help.)

Gregg Bissonette takes a rusty and uningratiating turn, and his bombastics in the midst of Greg Gisbert's trumpet solo are completely uncalled for. Dave Weckl may be playing well on "Time Check," but the band is so sloppy it's hard to tell. The only drummer who got a chance to record a new track in 1996 was—surprise!—producer Neil Peart. And though Neil's cymbal time is good, his fills are kick-heavy and miss the point, dragging the band down. There's even an original Rich drum track that's swallowed up by some sappy, inane vocals. I'm surprised that Buddy didn't somehow find a way to put the cosmic kibosh on this project.

Robin Tolleason

King Crimson

Epitaph (Discipline)

Ⓢ Ⓢ Ⓢ Ⓢ Ⓢ

drummer: Michael Giles

with Robert Fripp (gtr), Greg Lake (bs, vcl), Ian McDonald (kybd, sx, fl, vcl), Pete Sinfield (light show, lyricist)

This is a very important recording for drummers interested not only in the roots of Crimson, but of progressive rock and jazz/rock fusion. From a drumming point of view, there is monumental achievement and discovery on *Epitaph*, a double CD box set featuring live and studio tracks including the very first (May '69) and last (Dec. '69) recordings of Crimson's first incarnation.

The live concert recordings are where drummer Michael Giles is spectacular. His feel and guidance of this innovative and challenging music is commanding. His loose precision and creative attitude reminds one of the late Tony Williams, and his vicious spark, most evident on "A Man A City" and the classic "21st Century Schizoid Man," suggests Vinnie Colaiuta.

Crimson leader Robert Fripp says that "In 1969 Michael was arguably the most exciting and original drummer in rock, and in a world class. I never knew him to play badly." But Giles was not just a "rock" drummer. The tracks "Travel Weary Capricorn," "Drop In," and "Get Thy Bearings" are straight-ahead/avant-garde jazz pieces, with Giles showing the poise and grace of a seasoned swing player while structuring his original



SIGNIFICANT OTHERS

Drummer **DAVID ROKEACH** and percussionist **ZAKIR HUSSAIN** team up for some sweet and substantial East/West groove fusion on George Brooks' *Lasting Impression*. (Moment Records, 237 Crescent Road, San Enselmo, CA 94960)

Following their killer Dub *Over Dub* two-CD reggae trip-fest, Ryko/Heartbeat offers Lee Perry's *Upsetter In Dub*, a compilation of the legenday producer's mid-'70s, mostly B-side studio excursions, featuring the steel pulse of drummers **SLY DUNBAR**, **MICKEY "BOO" RICHARDS**, and **BENBOW McCREARY**.

The Egg's ambient techno music makes for good listening on *Albumen*, especially when drummer **MAFF SCOTT** loosens the groove up with some up-front and very live jamming. (Discovery/Warner Bros.)

Veteran Brazilian drummer **ZE EDUARDO NAZARIO** works his stunning talents as a member of Pau Brazil, a quintet mixing jazz, Brazilian rhythms, and vocalese on their latest, *Babel*. (Blue Jackel, 322 Hicksville Road, Bethpage, NY 11714)

You loved his books, now hear his drumming; author/educator/performer **ED URIBE** lets loose some exciting, crisp, grooving jazz/fusion kitwork on the keyboard-led Marc Rossi Group's CD *We Must Continue*. (MMC, PO Box 2127, Woburn, MA 01888)

Rating Scale

- Ⓢ Ⓢ Ⓢ Ⓢ Ⓢ Excellent
 Ⓢ Ⓢ Ⓢ Ⓢ Very Good
 Ⓢ Ⓢ Ⓢ Good
 Ⓢ Ⓢ Fair
 Ⓢ Poor

technique for the jazz/rock fusion styles of today.

Unafraid to embellish but never overplaying, Michael Giles' authoritative performances on these almost-thirty-year-old recordings is a fresh reminder that artistic drumming defies category, and is a timeless pleasure to inspire the veteran as well as the novice. (*Discipline Mail Order: PO Box 1533, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP5 5ER, England*)

Mike Haid

John Abercrombie/Dan Wall/ Adam Nussbaum

Tactics (ECM)



drummer: Adam Nussbaum
with J. Abercrombie (gtr), D. Wall (org)

Like rice and beans, like toast and jam, nothing brings out the mutual goodness in a guitar and Hammond B-3 like the organ-trio format. It's no surprise that innovative guitarists like John McLaughlin and John Abercrombie have found their latest voices in this time-proven forum. Recorded live, this third ECM



outing for Abercrombie's trio features the group in full stretch.

In traditional organ trios, the feel was often dominated by "kicked" bass pedals steering the swing towards a pumping, chunky blues drive. Instead, organist Dan Wall favors left-hand bass, creating a freer feel to complement his fresh, probing approach to the hefty keyboard. Combine that with

Abercrombie's brilliant, adventurous soloing and Nussbaum's "open" yet firmly grounded kit work, and you've got a truly modern take on the jazz organ trio.

Nussbaum once again proves why he's an "A-list" choice for progressives. He's got power, finesse, a personal sound, great feel, and most of all, huge restless ears that won't settle for clichés. Whether deftly swinging on the standard "You And The Night And The Music" or roaring on "Bo Diddley" with a mighty N'awlins-meets-Elvin-meets-the-'90s groove, Nussbaum is always navigating the road not taken. This trio fully understands the traditions of the organ trio, and that's why they break the rules so well.

Jeff Potter

Einstein

Einstein (Whirled Records)



drummer, percussionist: Jonathan Moyer
with Stan Jankowski (gtr, vcl), Jam Mangini (kybd)

This talented trio displays a variety of musical styles and influences, surrounding melody and odd meter with a taste of elegant and heavy progressive rock.

Guitarist Jankowski's often over-processed and angry vocals add an entertaining texture to the mix, and Moyer's rock-solid grooves make good practice for rock players to follow. John Bonham influences can be heard on "Sleep Under Stone," as chops are kept to a minimum, and "Mirror Mirror" displays tight double bass technique in an odd-meter setting.

The material here is comprised of well-structured tunes, and, considering this is Moyer's project, it's in no way the self-indulgent drum clinic it easily could have been turned into by a technician such as him. (*Whirled Records, 36 West 37th St., 3rd Fl., New York, NY 10018.*)

Mike Haid



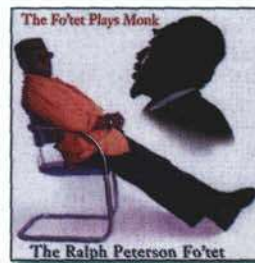
The Ralph Peterson Fo'tet

The Fo'tet Plays Monk (Evidence)



drummer: Ralph Peterson
with Steve Wilson (sx), Brian Carrot (vbs), Belden Bullock (bs)

Pairing Ralph Peterson, one of the most talented yet ignored of '80s jazz drummers, with the resourceful tunes of Thelonious Monk sounds like a winning combination. Peterson has often composed riotous, stormy music built on Art Blakey-inspired drumming, and *The Fo'tet Plays Monk* is a logical move for this thirty-four-year-old.



Peterson is comfortable with Monk's material throughout, laying daring rhythms and novel twists under tunes such as "Jackie-ing" and "Criss Cross." Where some might attack the lyrical moods of Monk with casual glee, or simply play it straight, Peterson's quartet plays

GOING UNDERGROUND

More strange and wonderful sounds from left of the dial.

Busy drummer/producer **JOHN McINTIRE** (Stereolab, Gastr Del Sol, Tortoise) puts his esoteric leanings on



hold for the pristine and likable sound of The Sea And The Cake. Their latest, *The Fawn* (Thrill Jockey, ★★★★★ 1/2),

nonetheless gives McIntire room to make his kit personality felt, mixing in woody skirmishes, polite brushes, press rolls, and sensitive sequences, always with an unflinching forward drive.

The Notwist's **MARTIN**

MESSERSCHMID has all the tools to supply this art/jangle/industrial rock band's new CD, 12 (Zero Hour, ★★★★★), with propulsive guidance into deep and dark waters. Coarsing linear beats, solid rock rhythms, double bass punctua-



tions, and noisy timbres are all part of his stockpile, adding a lot of interest to this German band's strangely inviting sound,

Manic yet very controlled tempos, a fondness for ska, and lots of deadly accurate percussive color mark much of the kit work found on *Reconquista! The Latin Rock Invasion* (Rhino, ★★★★★). This collection features top South American, Mexican, and European rock bands too loud for the Estefan set, too pop for the death rockers, and too...uh...foreign for your average skate punk. Be the first on your block to be hip to Los Fabulosos Cadillacs, Negu Gorriak, and the mighty Mano Negra.

Adam Budofsky

with the music's edges, bringing a relaxed but invigorating musicality to each song. And that's a welcome surprise, given Ralph's bombastic presence on recent records like his own *Reclamation Project*.

"Four In One" carouses at an easygoing tempo, with Ralph jabbing at Steve Wilson's melodious sax (but never overdoing it), while Peterson's "Monkin' Around" is a roaring ride, veering between Belden's agile fretwork, Carrot's spiraling tones, and the drummer's own firey playing. "Brilliant Corners," a low-down shuffle pumping beneath a dark melody, closes the set.

Ralph Peterson has seen many ups and downs since his early '80s tenure with Out The Blue. Hopefully, this album is a welcome return to form for this inventive drummer-composer.

Ken Micallef

Dinosaur Jr

Hand It Over (Reprise)



drummers: J Mascis (and gtr, vcl), George Berz (track 10)
with Mike Johnson, Kurt Fedora (bs)

The leader of Dinosaur Jr is also the drummer on most of the cuts on *Hand It Over*. J Mascis is better known for guitar tracks to which the term "wall of sound" does not quite do justice, but on the group's new release he proves his knowledge of what's important in a drum track.

J's authoritative tom and snare beat signals the mood of "I Don't Think," while he accents the subtle shifts in rhythm on "Never Bought It" with good time and taste. Mascis almost matches his own guitar density on "Nuthin's Goin' On" with a massive cymbal wash, and shows a good sense of the dramatic on "Can't We Move This," propelling the melody with some flam-laden percussion.



Berz plays on one track, "I Know Yer Insane," and in comparison sounds a little busy and not quite as "in sync." Mascis, as he shows on "Gotta Know," can have that manic edge, but still sound as solid as one of his own power chords.

Robin Tolleson

Spanish Fly

Fly By Night (Accurate)



drums and percussion: Ben Perowsky
with Steven Bernstein (trp), Marcus Rojas (tb),
David Trorizo (slide gtr)

So maybe you're a bit skeptical about a modern "jazz" band comprised of trumpet, tuba, and slide guitar. Well, give Spanish Fly a listen—only occasionally do they sound like a chamber orchestra tuning up. The rest of the time they play funky, bluesy music with a sly sense of humor. Of course, it doesn't hurt that the group's members represent the cream of the crop of New York's fertile downtown scene, and that the versatile, creative drumming of Ben Perowsky adds dynamic rhythmic movement and a deep groove to the band's sound.

BOOKS

Jazz Concepts

by Glenn W. Meyer

(Mel Bay)



level: intermediate to advanced
\$9.95

Jazz Concepts by Glenn W. Meyer contains twenty-six chapters of various techniques, starting with some effective "jazz independent coordination exercises" and "four-limb jazz independence." These sections do the job nicely, but quite suddenly the book leaps into numerous other sections filled with difficult exercises built on unclear concepts.

"16th Note Jazz Independence" sounds good enough as a title, but the introductory paragraph to the section gives some terrible advice on arm movement, as well as unclear instructions on how to practice the section. I have a hard time endorsing any specific instruction on how to physically move an elbow and exactly where to hit a cymbal on specific beats in a measure; there are too many different players, cymbals, techniques, and concepts in the world for the one restrictive arm motion described in this book. Also, this

introduction specifically instructs the reader to focus on quarter-note ride, and then proceeds to write a traditional jazz triplet cymbal pattern over thirty syncopated 16th-note snare and bass combinations. Well, what do we do? Are we to ignore the triplets, straighten them out, or play polyrhythmically? I don't know.

I was frustrated with the "triplet non-independent jazz approach" section as well, which attempts to give exercises based on a Jack DeJohnette approach to jazz drumming. Although I can see some good exercises here, it's as if I am looking through cobwebs of unclear instructions and too many permutations to focus on what is really physically happening on the drums. This concept (along with more than a few others in this book) should have been developed slowly and extensively, and possibly in a separate book altogether. Sure, nine permutations of twenty-one hand/foot triplet patterns will keep me busy for a while...but where is this going?

I do think that there are some good ideas and exercises in *Jazz Concepts*, but please... share the wealth... just don't throw it at us all at once!

Ted Bonar

Creative Drum Systems: Innovative Approaches For The Single Bass Drummer

by Glenn W. Meyer

(Mel Bay)



level: intermediate to advanced
\$12.95

If you're not put off by minor layout inconsistencies and non-PAS-standard notation in Glenn Meyer's *Creative Drum Systems*, you might be repelled (as I nearly was) by a glaring need for clarification of one of its primary components: the "non-independent" approach to drumming. But ignore your confusion and check it out anyway. As advertised, this book of facility-builders does help develop fluidity around the kit and open up creative possibilities by liberating the hands from their relatively static, conventionally designated "roles." Further, it applies the technique to numerous practical musical styles, plus some odd meters and "simulated double bass drum" beats that employ the floor tom as the impostor secondary kick. If his presentation isn't always crystal clear, Meyer's concept is fresh, valid, and substantial.

Rich Watson

Though Spanish Fly can't help but sound only like themselves, much stylistic terrain is covered, and Perowsky is ready every step of the way. From spaced-out rim-clicks to fat backbeats, swinging brush work to tasty Latin patterns (even a brief stop in New Orleans on "Sisters"), Ben's ability to seamlessly weave together different musical traditions helps *Fly By Night* flow despite its wanderlust.

The main theme of *Fly By Night*, which was originally commissioned by the San Francisco Ballet, is a melody akin to "My Bonnie Lies Over The Ocean." This basic motif appears through-



out the LP, set to different instrumental backdrops, while Tronzo blazes wicked slide licks over Bernstein's crisp ostinatos and Rojas' buoyant bass lines. In addition to his wide-open-sounding kit, Perowsky brings bongos, tambourine, and an array of cowbells to the mix.

Hey, though listening to Spanish Fly may not improve your sex life (then again, it might), *Fly By Night* will definitely show you a good time.

Michael Parillo

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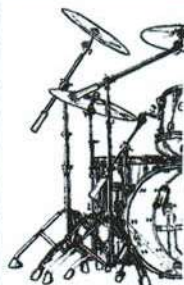
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Behind The Glass

Paul Fox

by Mark Parsons

If you listen to modern rock at all you've almost certainly enjoyed the work of successful producer Paul Fox. I have a self-serving theory that says that having a drumming background makes one a better producer, and although he soon left his traps for the keyboards, Paul's early stint on the drums is yet another datum for my proof.

Fox played on a variety of sessions ranging from acts like the Pointer Sisters, Rod Stewart, and the Commodores to the Tubes, Motley Crue, and Cock Robin, along with a slew of hit movies (*Top Gun*, *Beverly Hills Cop*, *Flashdance*, etc.). He moved into writing and arranging and then producing, handling production chores for bands such as XTC, the Sugarcubes, and some of the last stuff done by 10,000 Maniacs, including their *Unplugged* set. Most recently he's produced They Might Be Giants, the Wallflowers, Sky Cries Mary, and Sweet 75 (headed by Krist Novoselic, late of Nirvana).

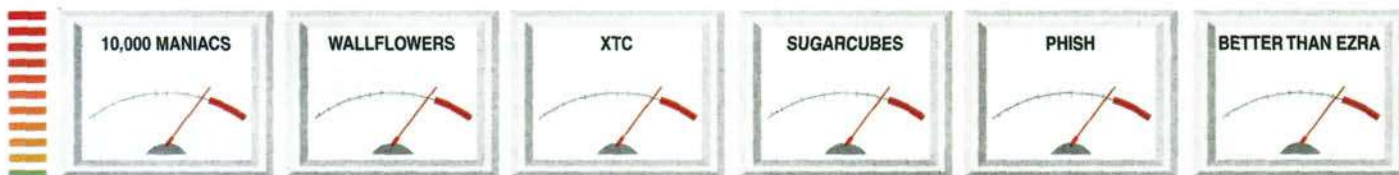
Paul is a thoughtful and articulate speaker with a lot of insight into the process of capturing *musical* drum tracks (so much so that I elected to leave out most of his comments on recording hardware



Fox tweaking toms with Jason Schwartzman, drummer of Phantom Planet

recording in. The next thing is who is playing the drums. And by that I don't mean *who* the actual person is, but rather *how* the drums are being played, along with who is recording them.

MP: Assume it's the night before a drummer's first professional recording session. What advice would you give him regarding his playing?



in order to squeeze in more of the good stuff, but the short story is that he prefers the analog domain and uses much the same mic's as everyone else).

Fox seems intent on working *with* drummers to achieve the best tracks possible (including everything from drum prep and tuning to groove creation and arrangement) and above it all has a supportive, inspiring attitude. If I were fortunate enough to land a major label deal, this is the sort of guy I'd want at the helm.

MP: Let's start by talking about the recipe for a great drum sound. In your opinion, what are the main ingredients?

PF: I would start with the kit itself and the room that you're

PF: I'd probably tell him to try and play the drums as *hard* as he can, without changing his style.

MP: Very interesting. Why is that?

PF: Two reasons. If a drummer has never been in a studio before he may not realize that you have to print enough signal on the tape to keep the sound above the noise. In other words, you have to put enough level on tape so that even when you're playing quietly you don't have more noise than you do signal. Also, to really fill up the room that you're in you have to send out enough *oomph* from the drums so that you're actually exciting the room mic's, in order to get the room sound.

I would never ask someone, though, to really change the way

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they play. If they're young and inexperienced and just used to playing one certain way and then all of a sudden you ask them to play a *different* way, it affects their feel. I put feel over sound, so even though the drums might not sound as good as if a very experienced drummer was playing them, the feel will still come across. If somebody is playing and the drums *sound* great but the feel is stiff or uneven, then I'd say that's the wrong approach and I'd encourage emphasizing the "feel factor."

MP: Speaking of sound, during a session what sort of input do you give regarding how a drummer might have his kit prepped?

PF: I'll usually start by listening to the drummer's kit, because I'm always interested in the character that the drummer has selected for his own sound. But I often find that drummers don't necessarily have the best sense of how to tune their drums or of what's right for the studio, unless they've already been in the studio a lot. A lot of times I'll find drummers showing up in the studio with the same type of heads they'd use live. They've been using those heads, often, for durability—maybe they're gigging a lot and they don't want to be changing heads all the time so they'll use *Pinstripes* or *Powerstrokes* or something. [In these situations] the first thing I'll do is listen to the kit and see if there's something special going on. I'll also listen through the mic's and make sure I'm really giving it a fair listen. But almost invariably I end up switching the heads to coated *Ambassadors*. I wouldn't necessarily encourage folks to use them live—they're going to go through them—but in the studio I find that I hear the sound of the *drum* when people use coated *Ambassadors*, as opposed to hearing the sound of the *head*. It just makes the drum, to my ears, sound bigger and more open, and you get more tone out of the shell than you do with a really thick head.

Also, I usually have someone work with me during the first few days of recording who tunes the drums *with* and *for* the drummer, so the drummer can communicate what he's looking for but maybe hasn't found yet. Usually with a good tuner you can get the drums—whatever drums you're using—to sound the best that they've ever sounded. In fact, sometimes drummers are amazed

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that their kit can sound so good, and I always try and encourage them to watch the tuners and what they do so that they can walk away with that knowledge.

MP: Let's talk about methods for a minute. When you're cutting rhythm tracks, is it your goal to get a good drum track that you can overdub to later, or are you looking for a keeper of the entire group?

PF: I usually go for the whole band, and what I usually do is use the time-honored tool of editing. To me, it's a good way to capture the best performances from everybody, and then I take the best of those and combine them into one great take.

MP: Since you're editing between takes, consistent tempo would obviously be important. Does this tend to make you utilize a click?

PF: If somebody's comfortable with a click, I'll use it. It depends. If a drummer has never used a click before I'm hesitant to use it. I'll usually experiment during pre-production to see how comfortable they feel with it. Some drummers gravitate towards it during

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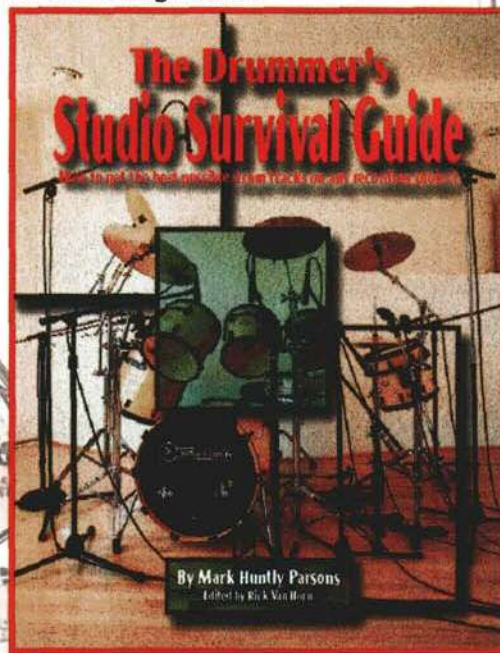
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pre-production—they get excited by it and see it as a challenge, and this makes tracking much easier. Some drummers just have fantastic internal time, or their parts are constructed in such a way that if they *were* playing inconsistent time, their parts would fall apart.

The other thing is that certain songs need to breathe, so you don't want somebody to stay totally adherent to a click and not let the tempo vary slightly, like between a verse and a chorus. One way to get around that is to start the drummer off with a click just so that everybody knows where the "home base" tempo is, and then pull the click out at a certain point and let everybody's momentum guide the track. The other, more complicated, approach is to actually write tempo maps for a click, so that when they get to the chorus and it picks up a little bit, the click moves along with them.

The one thing I try *not* to do is to give the click to the band. I really like the drummer to be the only person who has the click. That way, he's playing to the click and to the band, but the band is just responding to the drummer and *not* to the click. I find that when people really start *listening* to the click, the music can get very stiff, so if everybody's just playing to the drummer, then the music is going to feel more natural. Counter to that, if the drummer is just playing to the click and *not* listening to the band, then they can be off, so it's a fine line.

MP: Because of your background as a musician, do you get involved in working on arrangements or even specific drum parts during the pre-production process?

PF: Definitely. I started off as a drummer when I was a kid so I know a little bit about the "thinking" of drums, and when machines became popular in the early '80s I did a lot of drum programming. I studied drummers that I liked to learn how they played, then programmed the machines so they would sound and feel like a real drummer. It taught me a lot about arranging drum parts, and the importance of the bass player and the drummer being locked together. It also taught me how to communicate to a drummer what I'm hearing in my head, and I find it makes it much

easier for me in pre-production, even if it's just air drumming or singing a part to somebody.

If I have enough time I'll sit down for an hour or two in my home studio before going to a session and make a quick demo with *one* groove that I think works for the entire song—something that I call "the essence." It doesn't necessarily mean that I want the drummer to play just that one pattern all the way through, but it's a feel that works from top to bottom for the song. I'll make a little demo of a drumbeat and maybe put a quick keyboard over it just to give an idea of a feel that I think makes the song come alive, and then work from there. This gives [the drummer] the ability to be objective and just sit back and listen to somebody else playing the part, and then make a proper judgment.

MP: Sometimes I'll show somebody a skeleton part and I'll say, "Whatever you do, this is the *core*. You can add to it if you want, but never leave it behind."

PF: Exactly. I'm constantly going back to great rhythm tracks like Motown records or Sly & the Family Stone as reference points because, if nothing else, those grooves are flawless. When you listen to them, often there's a simplicity that works under everything else, leaving a lot of space for other instruments to do things. That way, when you *do* do something that ventures out of the core, as you called it, it calls attention and creates a contrast and that creates excitement.


If people try to make things too busy or really intricate *all the time*, it flattens things out and to me it's no more exciting than [sings bonehead 4/4 kick/snare part] because it then becomes a new level of normalcy.

MP: Which drummers have been particularly interesting to work with in the studio?

PF: [laughs] Oh, God—lots of them. I hesitate to name names because I don't want to slight anybody—I've really worked with lots of great drummers.

I did extensive work with Pat Mastelotto on XTC's *Oranges & Lemons*. That was a real treat. The record was a blend of real drums, rhythm boxes, drum machines, and sampler. We were try-

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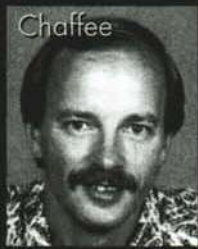


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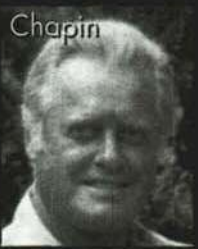
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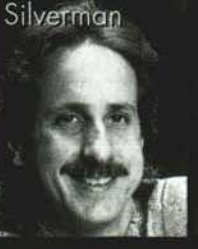
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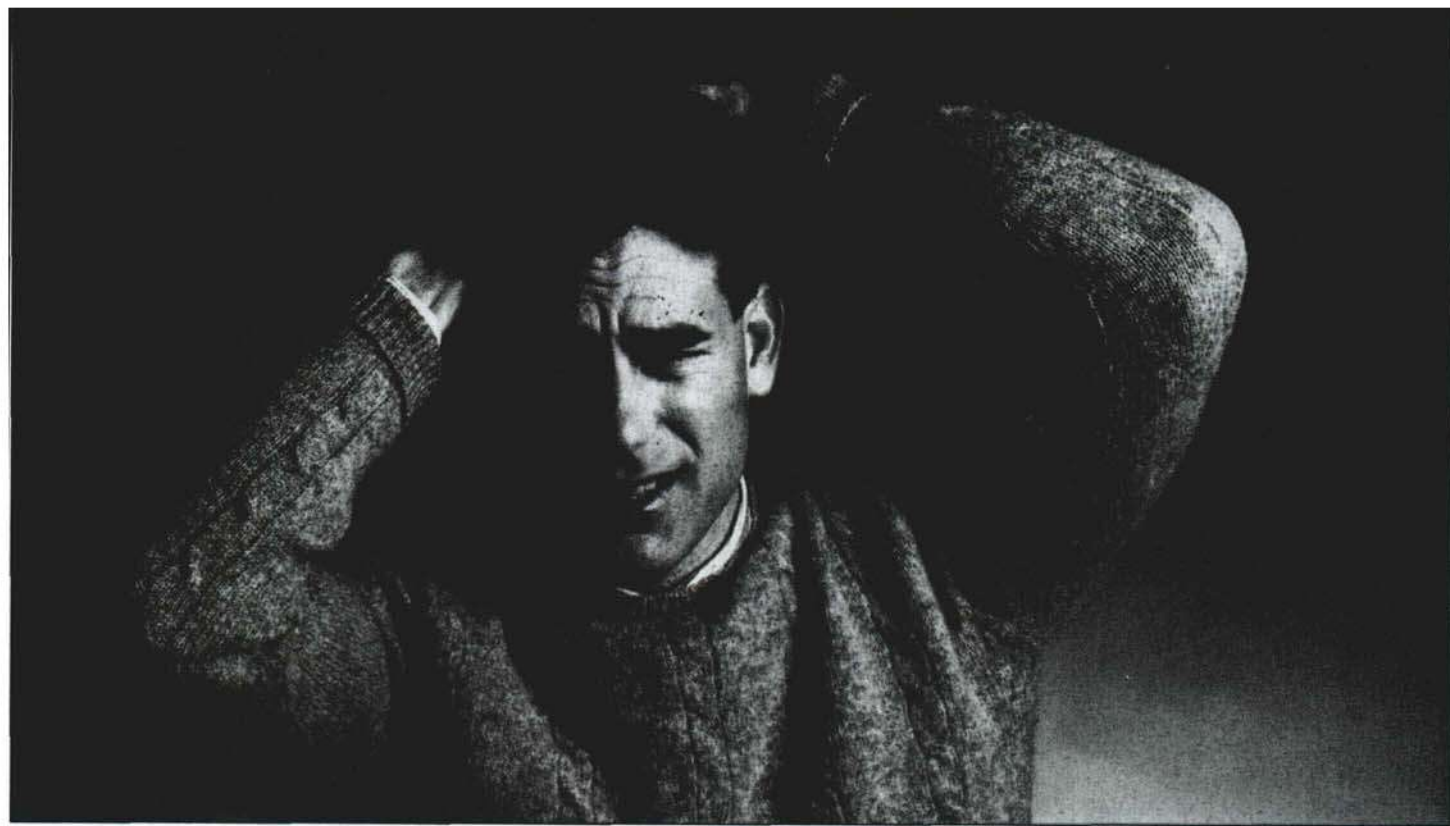


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ing to create a drumset that people couldn't necessarily put their finger on—is that a machine or is that real? Pat was great at it—he's an incredibly musical drummer.

Another incredibly musical drummer who turned me on to a lot of different approaches to the drums is Jerry Marotta. Jerry was the first person to expose me to using Taos drums in addition to "real" drums. The way he plays his drums and the way he comes up with parts left a real indelible mark of musicality on me.

A couple of other guys I should mention are Bill Rieflin and Brian Doherty. Bill played on the Sweet 75 record, which is Krist Novoselic's new band. Bill used to play with Ministry, and he really had a unique approach to the drums. He's a brilliant tuner and a brilliant player, and I learned a lot working with him. Brian is the drummer for They Might Be Giants, and he blew me away because almost every time he went to do a drum part he did it in the first take and usually the rest of the band would have to catch up to him. But he never flaunted his abilities. He understood that everybody is going to come together when they come together.

Another thing I did recently, which I'm really excited about, is a band called Sky Cries Mary, with Ben Ireland on drums. Sky Cries Mary has a deejay who uses drum machines and loops and computer programs, playing in conjunction with Ben on real drums. We cut that record live, and the ability of Ben to interact with the drum machine beats and use them as grace notes within his own patterns—it was quite a challenge, and he pulled it off flawlessly.

MP: Any drumming nightmares? Without naming names, of course.

PF: You know, I've been pretty fortunate. One time I had a young drummer and it was a little bit hard because he just couldn't keep up with everybody else in the band, but it was really just a question of experience rather than ability.

MP: What was the solution? Did you have to replace him, or just give him some direction?

PF: I gave him direction and just tried to be encouraging. There are other producers I won't name who would just go ahead and replace the drummer. If I *couldn't* get the tracks I'd do the same thing, but most

of the time I try to find what somebody's strengths are and then work within those strengths. I try to be really encouraging and demonstrative in coming up with solutions, but sometimes people can't get up to that next level in time. That's when I just have to focus on what they *are* capable of doing and try to design the part around *that*.

MP: What's the most common problem you run into with regards to tracking drums?

PF: That's hard to say. If I was going to put anything out to the "drummers of the world" [laughs]—and again this has to do with inexperience in the studio—it's that drummers tend to play their hi-hat really loud. They get excited and use their right hand like a hammer, and then there's so much bleed into the snare mic' that when it comes to mixing it's hard to isolate the snare drum. I try to encourage drummers to learn a dynamic between their hi-hat and their snare drum so that the snare is just plain *louder* than the hi-hat. It's a nuance, but if drummers are conscious of it, it'll end up making their drums sound better on recordings.

MP: To make things go smoother in the studio, what else should a drummer be aware of?

PF: A drummer should know about picking the right drums or be open-minded about trying different drums. He should also have some kind of an idea as to what kind of a sound he wants. I read this in an interview with Lars [Ulrich] one time: "There are two dynamics to playing drums in the studio. One is *loud* and the other is *louder*." [laughs] That makes a lot of sense to me. It doesn't mean you don't want to play soft, but the *soft* has to be loud enough to get on tape well, especially in the analog realm. It's important to find the different parts of a drum that can make different sounds. When you learn this you can create more dynamics within your part, so your soft section will *feel* soft even though you're not playing it like a wimp.

MP: Any final tips?

PF: Listen to old records! Feel free to experiment. There are no rules. Trial and error usually yields some interesting results. Don't let anybody tell you that this is the only way it can be.



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The Working Drummer's Quiz!

by Ron Hefner

We working drummers are a self-reliant group. Most of us have no roadies to schlep our equipment for us and keep it in tip-top shape, and no limousines or buses to transport us to and from the gig. We also endure working conditions—as well as musical conditions—that are often less than ideal. All in all, I feel that "working" drummers, who take every call that comes in to make a living, pay a lot of dues. With this in mind, I offer a "dues-paying" test to determine whether you truly merit the revered title of "Working Drummer." Some of the questions may suggest more than one correct answer—but if you're really a working drummer, there should be little guesswork.

The Working Drummer's Quiz

1. The amount you spend on new, heavy-duty hardware will be equivalent to the amount you spend on:
 - a. drumheads
 - b. cymbals
 - c. chiropractor bills
2. The gig is over, the band is packing up. Normally, you will have to spend an extra twenty minutes:
 - a. waiting for your paycheck
 - b. discussing the next gig with bandmembers
 - c. waiting for the bass player to lift up his amp so you can get your mic' cord out from under it
3. When a wing nut spins off a cymbal stand, it normally:
 - a. rolls under the bass drum
 - b. falls between the cracks in the drum riser
 - c. dematerializes and is transferred to another universe
4. After playing a one-nighter, your paycheck will typically arrive:
 - a. a week later
 - b. two weeks later
 - c. after you have quit the music business and gone into selling life insurance
5. The bandleader berates you for playing "too much." Your response is:
 - a. you were feeling particularly energetic and creative that night
 - b. you're not Al Jackson
 - c. you spent the afternoon listening to a Buddy Rich album

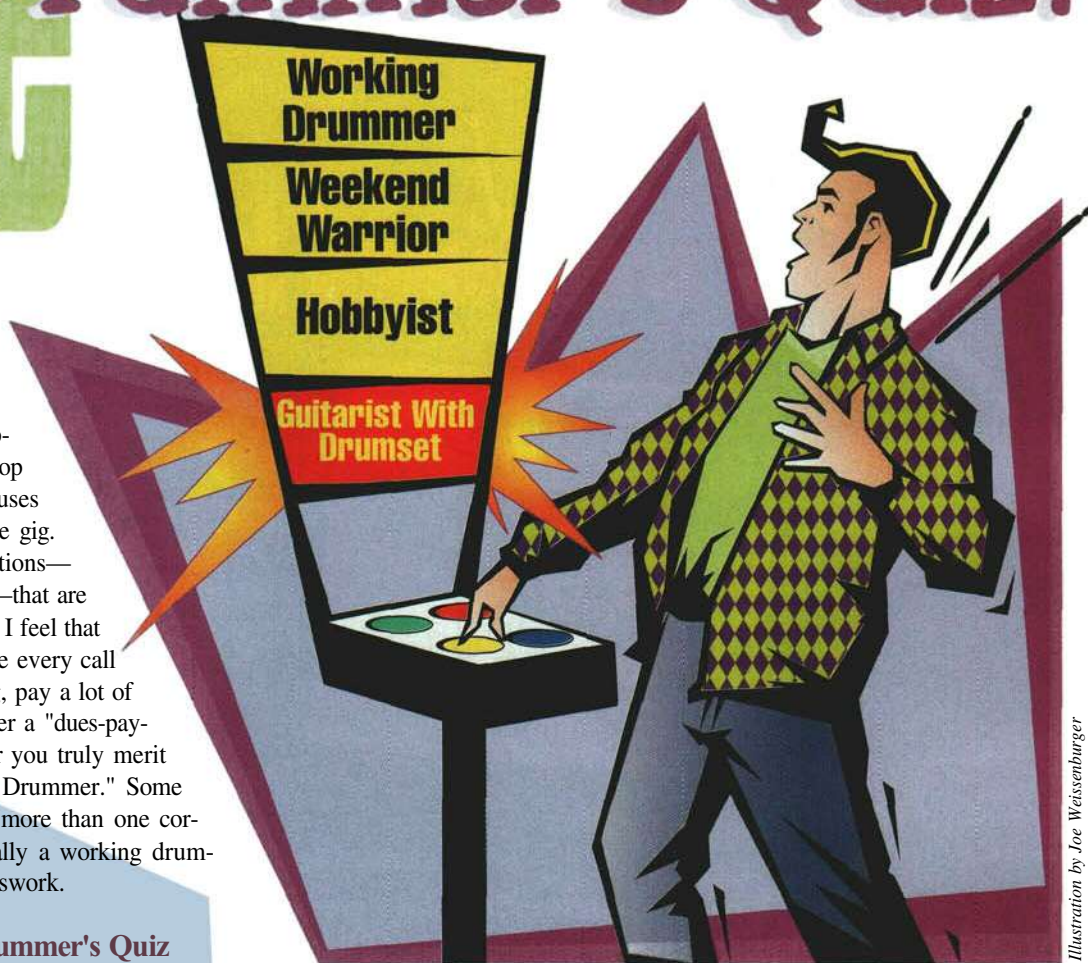


Illustration by Joe Weissenburger

6. During a dinner set, your band plays an oft-requested old standard, "Satin Doll." Immediately afterward, a customer comes up to the bandstand and:
- compliments you on the nice arrangement
 - asks if you know any other Ellington tunes
 - requests "Satin Doll"
7. On a rock 'n' roll gig, your band plays the fastest speed-metal tune in the repertoire. Immediately afterward, a customer comes up to the bandstand and:
- compliments you on the nice arrangement
 - asks if you know any other Metallica tunes
 - requests something fast
8. In between two consecutive gigs on the same day, you normally:
- go home, change clothes, and have dinner
 - go to the second gig, where you are given dinner and a comfortable place to change clothes
 - go to a gas station, change clothes in the bathroom, and have a bag of peanuts and a cup of coffee
9. The last set on a week night is normally played to:
- an appreciative audience
 - an appreciative but dwindling audience
 - four drunks at a back table who are screaming out requests for "Wipe Out" and asking how late the band plays
10. When you pack up your equipment after the gig and are loading it into your car, the trumpet player:
- has offered to help carry some cases
 - is helping the other bandmembers with the sound system
 - is home, has already watched *David Letterman*, and is half an hour into *Conan O'Brien*
11. The document a working drummer fears most is:
- the monthly calendar
 - the Gary Chester book
 - IRS form 1099
12. Working drummers subscribe to *Modern Drummer* because:
- it's informative
 - it's educational
 - it's tax-deductible
13. The best thing about a house gig is:
- the opportunity to establish a regular client base
 - being able to rehearse in the club during the day
 - dusting off your drums every three months
14. Working drummers often play outdoors, which is not good for their instruments because of moisture and humidity. In order to keep their drums in good playing condition, they:
- wipe down the shells and hardware with a clean, dry cloth every couple of weeks
 - clean and polish the drums about twice a year
 - tape packets of *Damp-Rid* to the insides of the shells
15. Philosophically speaking, the working drummer:
- agonizes over the conflict between his or her artistic aspirations and the reality of making a living
 - doesn't worry about questions of art, but just tries to do a good job
 - wants to know if there is going to be overtime and, if so, how much will it pay

Scoring

As if you hadn't guessed, all of the correct answers are "c." Give yourself one point for each correct answer. Add up the score to find out your standing among working drummers:

Ten or fewer: You are not a working drummer. You are a trumpet player.

Eleven: You're only twenty weddings away from becoming a working drummer.

Thirteen: You're one of us. The two answers you missed will take care of themselves in due time.

Fourteen: You've been one of us for a long time. Your favorite gigs are the ones where you can get away with just using a bass drum, snare, and hi-hat.

Fifteen: A perfect score! You've been a working drummer for too long. Start studying for your insurance license.



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Seattle World Rhythm Festival

Paris has the Eiffel Tower and New York has the Statue of Liberty. Seattle has the Space Needle, which, when it was erected in 1960, spoke of upper altitude...outer space...the future. However, at the foot of the Space Needle recently, all the talk turned to a tradition more down-to-earth: rhythm. The fifth annual World Rhythm Festival, held at the Seattle Center May 2-4, featured a dizzying schedule of round-the-clock workshops, clinics, and performances, along with a booming vendor's marketplace. The Festival, produced by the non-profit Seattle World Percussion Society, was open to the public and free of charge.

Event sponsors, including the Percussive Arts Society, Ludwig, Remo, Toca, Sabian, Pro-Mark, Yamaha, Vic Firth, and LP, took the opportunity to reach the more than 8,000 rhythm enthusiasts who turned out to look, listen, and learn. Even master craftsman Pete Engelhart was on hand with some of his remarkable new bells. Veteran drum major Arthur Hull led yet one more gargantuan drum circle.

Scanning the throng of fans, enthusiasts, and players gathered for his drumset clinic, David Garibaldi observed: "It's great to gather around the drums like this. I hate to say it, but you'd be hard pressed to get this many bass players in one room!"

Garibaldi's clinic (this year's featured attraction) was one of the few nods to the conventional drumset. The focus of the festival has always been on percussion traditions from around the



The festival featured a drum circle of over 700 players.

In Memoriam Bobby Chouinard

Bobby Chouinard, a rock drummer who parlayed local success in his hometown into a career with some of rock's top artists, died recently in New York City, apparently the victim of a heart attack. He was forty-three.

Chouinard, a native of Brockton, Massachusetts, began drumming at the age of twelve, and was playing with a band of older pros by the time he was fourteen. This led to work with a variety of Boston-area bands that kept Bobby touring for up to 250 nights a year. A move to New York City brought him into the recording scene and eventually to the Billy Squier band. Chouinard enjoyed success with Squier in the 1980s, including platinum albums, world tours, and a feature in the November 1985 issue of

Modern Drummer. Other musicians with whom he worked included Cher, Chuck Berry, Alice Cooper, Peter Wolf, and Ted Nugent.

Randy Mauser

Country drumming lost an unsung hero in May of this year when Randy Hauser died suddenly of a heart attack at his home in Hendersonville, Tennessee. He was in his early forties.

Though his drumming career also included a significant stint with country singing star Bill Anderson, Randy's work as the touring drummer for Chet Atkins will stand as his most prestigious gig. He was both a talented acoustic drummer and a sharp electronic programmer, and he had endorsements with Tama, ddrum, Remo, Paiste, and other major companies during his career. He was also a managing partner in Gatlin Brothers Music, which involved him heavily in production and

artist development.

It is ironic that Randy left us in a similar manner as did Larrie Londin, who had also done extensive work for Chet Atkins. Had Randy lived to Larry's age, their physical similarity would have been striking. After Larrie's passing, Chet made sure Randy received some of his gear. Though Randy's musical contributions do not approach those of Larrie, his stature, generosity, warmth, and sincerity were akin to all that I have ever read about Larrie.

Randy Hauser was one of those "tree-top-tall" people that weekend warriors like me are blessed to know personally. I met him in 1992 when I hired Chet Atkins to do a benefit concert in Montgomery, Alabama. Randy took me under his wing, invited me to Nashville for private lessons, and became a good friend. He is survived by his wife, Pam, their two children, and hundreds of friends.

Paul Alexander

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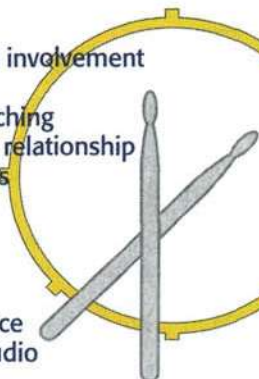
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world—and the variety this year extended nearly off the map. A workshop on Indian tabla technique was followed by a class on Afro-Brazilian samba drumming. A Liberian djembe class was held across the hall from the berimbau clinic. There was frame drumming, capoeira movement, Middle Eastern techniques for doumbek and tar, "roots" mozambique from Cuba, taiko drumming from Japan, sabar rhythms from Senegal, mallet technique, "movement energetics," and even a Venezuelan maraca workshop.

The grand total of seventy workshops over three days (enhanced by non-stop performances on several stages) left even some hardened festival-goers physically stunned. One rain-coated young woman—departing the event with a dog under her arm and a djembe over her shoulder—collapsed onto a wet bus-stop bench. Asked for her favorite event, she said, "Oh, probably the 'clave consciousness' workshop, because it made just perfect sense of all the hard stuff I've been hearing." She added, "Now I just have to *remember* some of it until I get home!"

Bill Kiely

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Disabled Drummers Association

The Disabled Drummers Association has recently been established to assist individuals with physical disabilities in the pursuit of their drumming aspirations. The organization's specific goals include:

1. Create opportunities for disabled drummers by conducting a public awareness campaign to eliminate the stereotype of the disabled drummer.
2. Involve all interested members in the day-to-day activities of the organization.
3. Help members with funds needed for lessons, equipment, study materials, etc.
4. Put on clinics and perform at public events regionally to raise money to fund organizational activities.
5. Encourage *all* disabled people (through drum expos and media coverage) that they, too, can play drums.
6. Send periodic information to other organizations that serve the disabled.
7. Establish an in-house board to design and submit proposals for adaptive drum equipment to manufacturers.
8. Persuade manufacturers to develop such adaptive products for disabled drummers.

Memberships are hoped not to exceed \$20 per year, and the organization is working to be able to provide gift memberships to those unable to afford even that figure. A directory for disabled drummers is currently being established. Interested parties should send their name, address, phone number, and any comments to Kurt Levee (DDA president), PO Box 1056, Manhattan Beach, CA 90267, or to John Mulvan Jr. (DDA vice-president), 610 Beach Blvd., Forked River, NJ 08731, (609) 971-9762.

Endorser News

New Zildjian cymbal endorsers include **Hilary Jones** (Lee Ritenour), **Troy Davis** (Terence Blanchard), and **Angelo Collura** (Deana Carter).

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Efrain Toro, **Charlie Grover** (Sponge), **John Humphrey** (the Nixons), and **Darren Pfeiffer** (Goldfinger) are new Afro Percussion artists.

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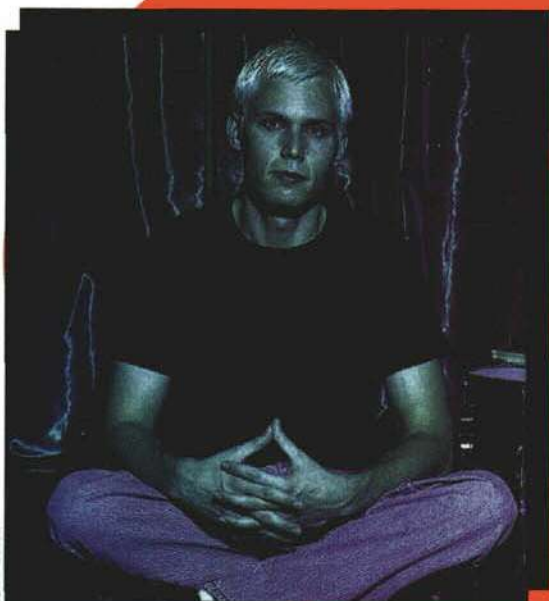
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Schwabisch-Gmund, Germany's Klaus Bohnlein is obviously into symmetry. A left-handed drummer, he decided to create a kit that offered matching musical "targets" on either side (and presented a balanced look in the process).

The drumshells were made by Rimmel Drums, a custom builder in the Allgau district near Munich. Klaus added Sonor hardware, custom rack components, and other "bits and pieces" he devised himself. The kit includes two 20" bass drums, 8", 10", 12", 13", 14", and 15" rack toms, 16" and 18" floor toms, an 8x14 steel-shell primary snare drum, 8x10 beech and 3 1/2x13 maple secondary snares (suspended opposite the floor toms), two 8" concert toms (at the right rear of the kit), and an 18" RotoTom (at the left rear of the kit).

Klaus's cymbal setup is also symmetrical. His unique crash-cymbal arrangement requires an oversized tripod to mount the five cymbals at the front of the kit. Klaus even uses two hi-huts: a legless "standard" version to his right, and a cable-operated model to his left.

PHOTO REQUIREMENTS

1. Photos must be high-quality and in color. 35mm slides are preferred; color prints will be considered; Polaroids not accepted.
2. You may send more than one view of the kit.
3. Only show drums, no people.
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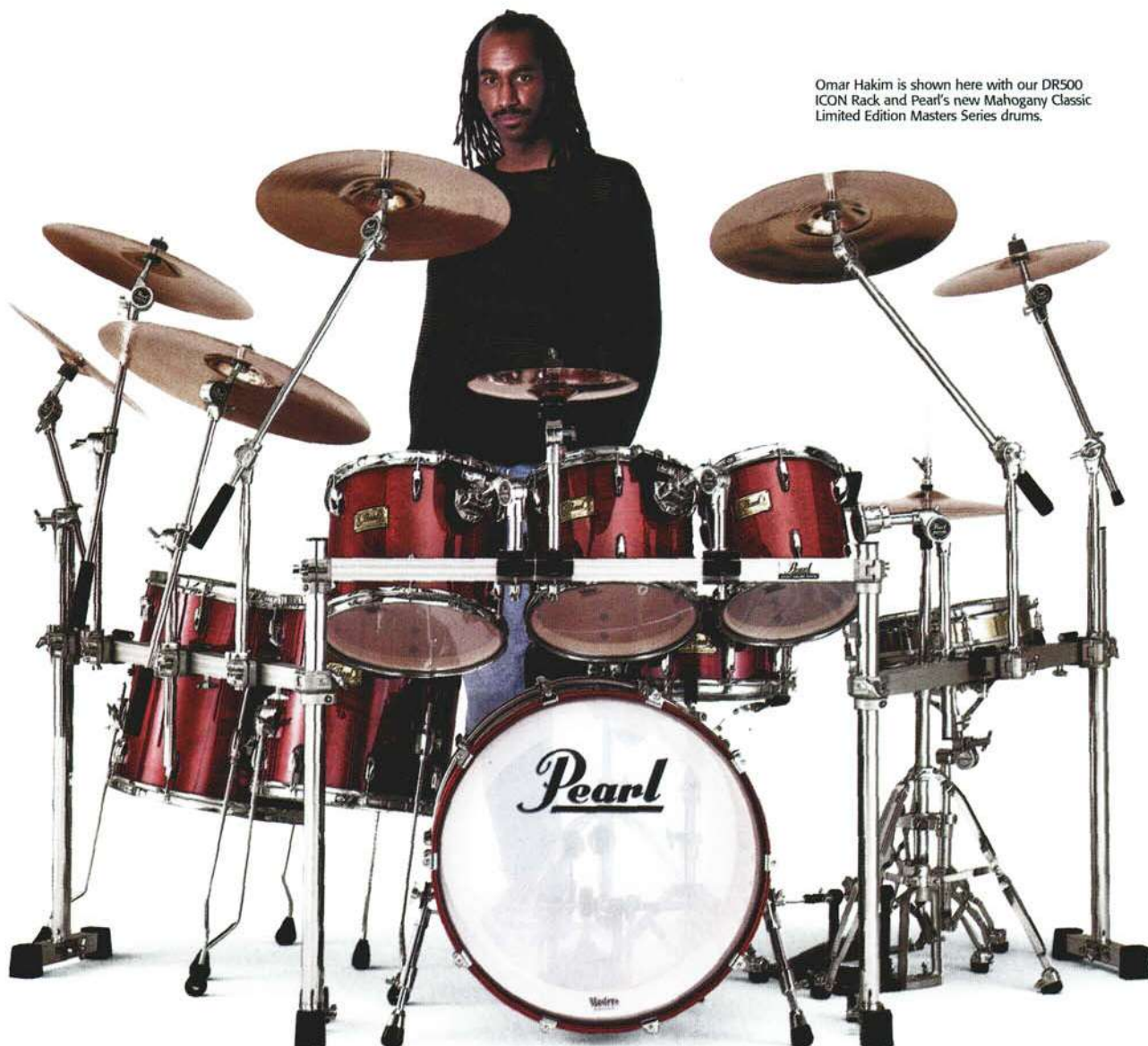
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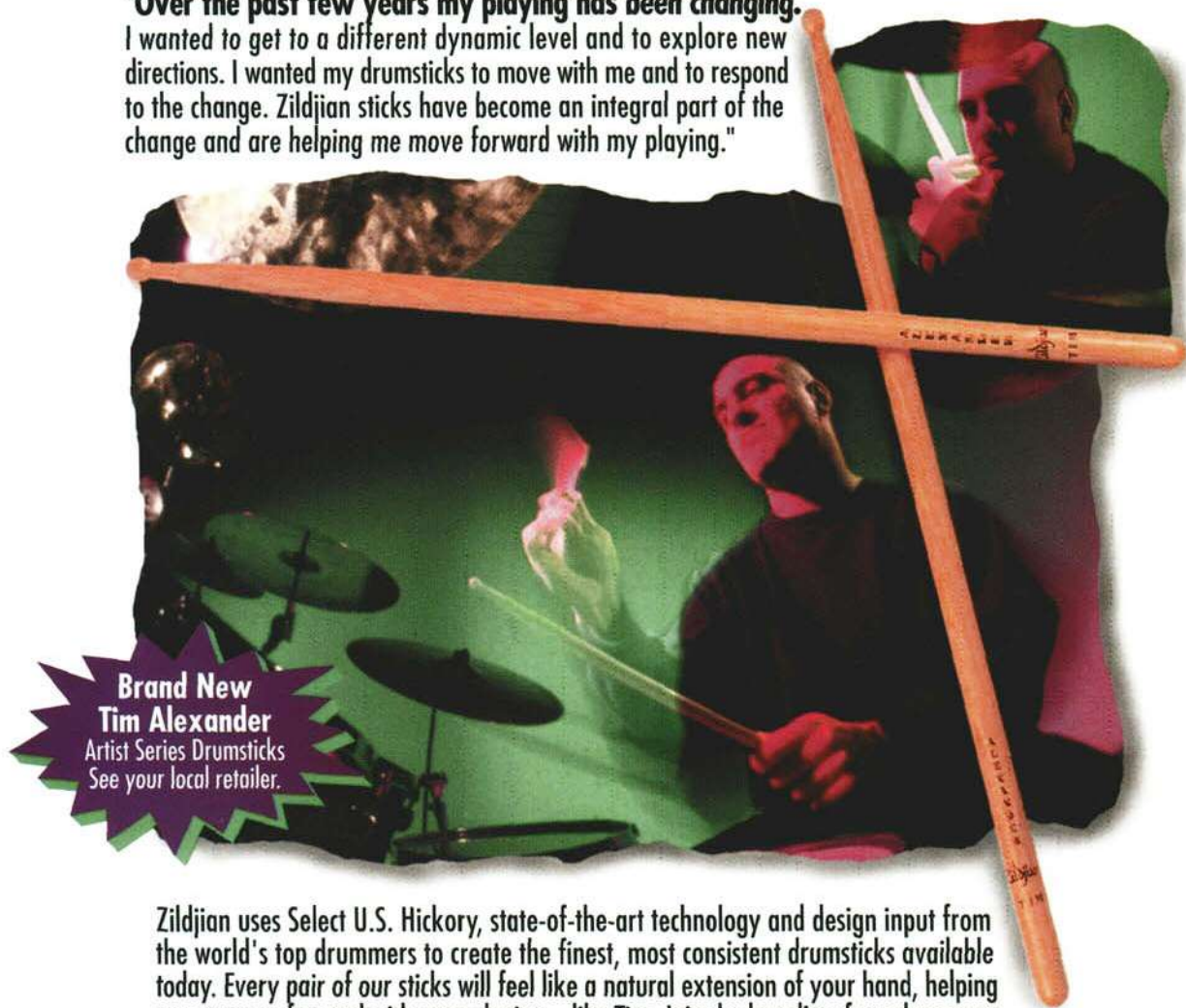
Omar Hakim is shown here with our DR500 ICON Rack and Pearl's new Mahogany Classic Limited Edition Masters Series drums.



"A big change has happened in my playing."

Tim Alexander talks about his Zildjian Drumsticks:

"Over the past few years my playing has been changing. I wanted to get to a different dynamic level and to explore new directions. I wanted my drumsticks to move with me and to respond to the change. Zildjian sticks have become an integral part of the change and are helping me move forward with my playing."



**Brand New
Tim Alexander**
Artist Series Drumsticks
See your local retailer.

Zildjian uses Select U.S. Hickory, state-of-the-art technology and design input from the world's top drummers to create the finest, most consistent drumsticks available today. Every pair of our sticks will feel like a natural extension of your hand, helping you to move forward with your playing....like Tim. Join the long list of top drummers that have made the move to Zildjian Drumsticks.



Adrian Young
5B & Super 5A
Nylon Tip
No Doubt



Kate Schellenbach
3A Wood Tips
Luscious Jackson



Kirk Covington
5B Wood Tip
Tribal Tech



Lonnie Wilson
2B Wood Tip
Nashville Session Great